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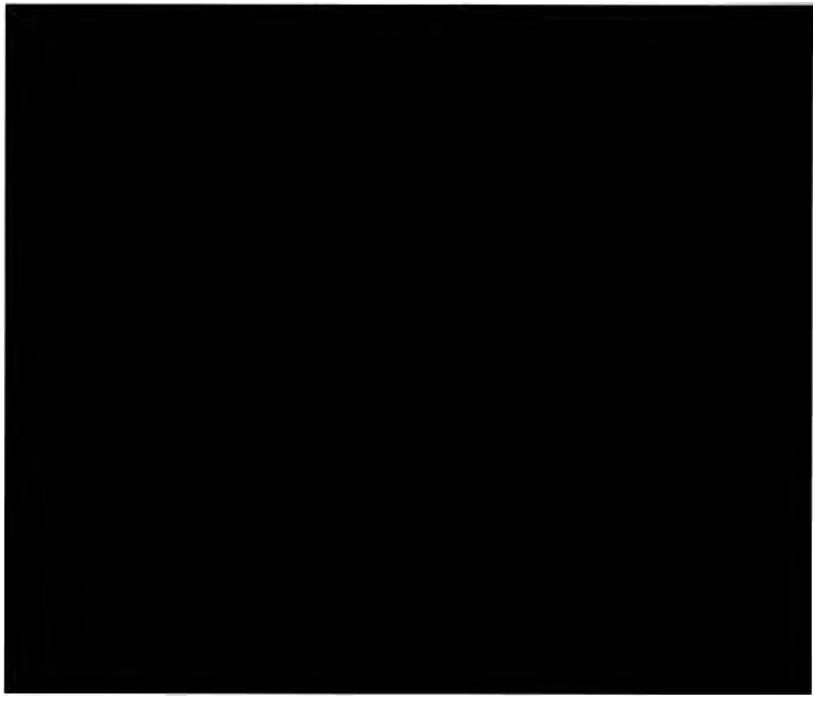

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HEROES OF MYTH AND LEGEND

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
BENJ. IDE WHEELER

The Argonauts

BEATRICE STEVENS

The Argonauts

"Then Jason went boldly with the boy, and found the two princesses standing."

—Vol. VII, p. 90.

Library for Young People

HEROES OF MYTH AND LEGEND

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
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INTRODUCTION

I HAVE a boy now about nine years old to whom for three or four years past I have been reading various stories as known and loved by various peoples of various times. Though "Alice in Wonderland" and the "Jungle Book" well maintain their prestige, it is clear that on the whole the old-time stories are the ones that lay strongest hold on the youngster's interest and bear multiple re-reading best. As if they were once for all as old as they can be, they are the ones that brighten with eternal youth and freshness the oftener they are read. Church's "Stories from Homer" was one of the first books of its sort attempted. It tells the stories in brief and simple form, but does not fail to carry something of the genial dignity and stately form of speech that give the tales much of their timeless worth. The words are simple, but the charm of dignity and rhythm is there: "And Hector took the helmet from his head and laid it on the ground, and caught his child in his hands, and kissed him and dandled him, praying aloud to Father Zeus and all the gods: 'Grant, Father Zeus, and all ye gods, that this child may be as I am, great among the sons of Troy; and may they say some day, when they see him

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carrying home the bloody spoils from war: "A better man than his father, this," and his mother shall be glad at heart.'" If any one thinks a boy can resist this, try him and see. Long names like Andromache and Agamemnon are no stumbling-blocks. They only help lift the picture into the skies of the grand unreal, and, as for themselves, with their mellow ring, they become with Abou Ben Adhem and Rikki-Tikki-Tavi and Tippecanoe eternal possessions.

The Iliad I found was in general preferred to the Odyssey. It must be the rush and movement and double heroic therein that prevail. "So spake he, and drew the mighty sword that hung by his side: then, as eagle rushes through the clouds to pounce

from Greek and Hebrew sources stand out from the rest in the immediate interest they command. This collection offers from the Old Testament only the story of Joseph, but there are many others that stand the test valiantly, Noah and the Ark, David and Goliath, David and Saul, Absalom, Ruth, The Escape from Egypt, etc.

But in the Old Testament stories the great men and giants have to take the place of the gods of the Greek and Hindu tales, and this sets a restraint that childhood does not appreciate. Children learn monotheism out of the catechism, but polytheism is frankly much more to their liking. The gods and demigods do big things with so much readier ease and abandon, and the whole atmosphere of polytheism is so much freer from those subtleties of analysis which in developed monotheistic thought distinguish the provinces and powers of God and man, man and nature, that the unbridled naturalness of the child finds its affinity there, not here. The children of civilized men, like other savages, regard the discrimination which restricts reason and speech to men and denies it to other animals as a gratuitous snobbery—that is, if they regard it at all; at any rate, they prefer animals that give an account of themselves, and are tremendously interested in learning what the account is. Like other savages, they furthermore prefer that the sun should be a dragon or a charioteer or a big chief or anything rather than a clump of gases. They

Introduction

vill at school learn formally and reluctantly of the atter estate, but they will hear gladly by the hour bout the goings and doings of a real live Sun. The nly device which has succeeded in stirring in the uvenile breast a yearning for botany, even when loaked under the name of "nature study," is that vhich presents the life struggle of plants under a nythological guise as involving conscious personal xistence. The instinct which made Daphne and Narcissus and Hyacinth proper names among the Greeks holds everywhere in the human race the parterre and is repeated in the childhood of every ndividual life. A reflective civilization may purge

thought. Vivifying and personizing constitute, from the point of view of child mind and of savage mind, one and the same process, and the two are perfectly blended in what we call play. Myths and child's play deal with a fathomless credulity—the deeper indeed the better, for it is the creative and active credulity—that which awakens the life-conditions—which gives the highest joy. Even in the receptive credulity it is the perception of the life-conditions on suggestion of them which stimulate the mind, not the mere passive hearing. It is a well-known fact that the cruder toys yield the child more delight than the more realistic ones. An old rag doll wins a deeper and more lasting hold on a child's interest and affections than the finest Parisian fac-simile. A toy railway-train, mounted to run on perfect miniature rails and equipped almost to the extent of a working model with the finest mechanism of locomotion, will be found, in general experience, after arousing a temporary interest in seeing the "wheels go round," shortly to pall upon the child's attention and be forsaken for some simpler, cruder toy that gives the imagination more to do. It is the positive activity of awakening and animating stocks and stones in the fashioning of visions, dreams, and ideals about them, in them, and out of them that constitutes at once the zest of play in the mind of the child, and the charm of myth-making and divinity-making in the mind of the primitive man.

Introduction

The arrangement of divinities under orders and amilies in the theogonies, the fixing of their at- ibutes and the standardizing of their biographies rough critical discussion, and the establishment of eir types in perfected art mark the beginning of the nd of any given system of natural polytheism, just the introduction of models in place of toys marks e beginning of the end of play.

The Greek system of polytheism as made known to s in the mythology of the classical age was just ripen- g to its downfall, but it brought with it out of an rlier day abundant suggestions of a freedom of eatment which had kept it alive through a vital

within the right of the common man to find him anew in the present, every-day behaviors of the waves and storms. He had come to be a rather finished god.

Hermes appears to the modern scientific student of mythology to have been almost certainly in origin the god of the wind. He was the messenger of the sky-god Zeus, son of Zeus and of Maia, goddess of the rain-cloud. He is quick and supple like the wind, and as such fosters athletics. His slick and thievish tricks remind of the wind, and so do his wingèd feet; he is a breezy character withal. He was the reputed inventor of the two primitive wind instruments, the flute and the syrinx; the primitive lyre as an Æolian harp was his discovery too. He is the breeze that fans the light, airy souls or psyches of the departed, themselves no more than breaths (*animae*), into the realm of death. But still the ancients, so far as they have let us know, had either forgotten this or scarcely held it present in their thought. Plato in the Cratylus (408A) on the basis of a wretched etymology pronounces him the god of speech or discourse. So far then as any direct connection with nature in the minds of the later Greeks is concerned, Hermes was a finished, conventionalized type, a petrified nature-god. Athene even more. It is possible she once personified the lightning. The story of her leaping at birth full-armed and with a loud cry from the forehead of the sky-god Zeus would then have its meaning; so would her brandished lance (Pallas), but for most of her

doings and attributes this presumption of origin affords no reasonable explanation, and she must therefore stand so thoroughly isolated from any observable nature connection that not even the modern scientific mythologist can surely discover it. In marked contrast with the case of Athene stands that of Apollo, whose connection with the sun was clearly present to the minds of the Greeks.

A complicating element in all attempts to rediscover the meaning of these great gods in terms of nature lies in the use to which they all had more or less been put as heads and ideal founders of those magnified families known as the clan, the tribe, and

origin to be identified as nature worship in sharp contrast to that of the hero divinities and the gods of clans and families as soul-worship. Both groups of worship issue from a condition of thought in which no positive line of demarcation is to be drawn between the worship and care of the souls of departed ancestors resident in graves and the worship of those souls which to primitive thought were thought of as everywhere the vivifying force in natural phenomena and resident in whatever lived and moved, and in various objects weird and strange. The whole tangled framework of an elaborate polytheism like that of Greece or India was the resultant of various differentiations out of many growths hopelessly confused and crossed, but all growths from the common soil of a primitive thought wherein nature and man still blended and belonged to each other. Grown folks will read the stories of gods and heroes, and some of them will find refreshment in following these old-time pathways trodden by the early feet of our race; but others will stumble in the simple, roaming paths, being too long accustomed to pavements and being many of them also blinded by the light of the lamp they always carry. Children skip gladly along the paths and stumble not; they are on familiar ground, and furthermore have not acquired the habit of the lamp.

BENJ. IDE WHEELER.

HEROES OF MYTH AND LEGEND

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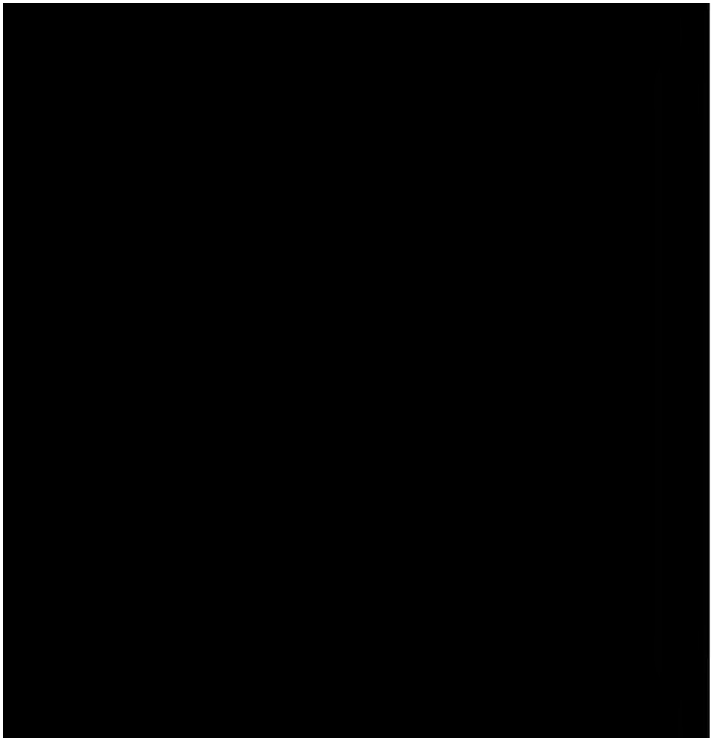

HEROES OF MYTH AND LEGEND

PERSEUS

By CHARLES KINGSLEY

Part I

How Perseus and His Mother Came to Seriphos

ONCE upon a time there were two princes who were twins. Their names were Acrisius and Prœtus, and they lived in the pleasant vale of Argos, far away in Hellas. They had fruitful meadows and vineyards, sheep and oxen, great herds of horses feeding down in Lerna Fen, and all that men could need to make them blest: and yet they were wretched, because they were jealous of each other. From the moment they were born they began to quarrel; and when they grew up each tried to take away the other's share of the kingdom, and keep all for himself. So first Acrisius drove out Prœtus; and he went across the seas, and brought home a foreign princess for his wife, and foreign warriors to help him, who were called Cyclopes; and drove out Acrisius in his turn; and then they fought a long while up and down the land, till the quarrel was settled, and Acrisius took

Argos and one-half the land, and Prœtus took Tiryns and the other half. And Prœtus and his Cyclopes built around Tiryns great walls of unhewn stone, which are standing to this day.

But there came a prophet to that hard-hearted Acrisius and prophesied against him, and said, "Because you have risen up against your own blood, your own blood shall rise up against you; because you have sinned against your kindred, by your kindred you shall be punished. Your daughter Danae shall bear a son, and by that son's hands you shall die. So the gods have ordained, and it will surely come to pass."

And at that Acrisius was very much afraid; but he

away and out to sea. And away and out to sea before it floated the mother and her babe, while all who watched them wept, save that cruel father, King Acrisius.

So they floated on and on, and the chest danced up and down upon the billows, and the baby slept upon its mother's breast: but the poor mother could not sleep, but watched and wept, and she sang to her baby as they floated; and the song which she sang you shall learn yourselves some day.

And now they are past the last blue headland, and in the open sea; and there is nothing round them but the waves, and the sky, and the wind. But the waves are gentle, and the sky is clear, and the breeze is tender and low; for these are the days when Halcyone and Ceyx build their nests, and no storms ever ruffle the pleasant summer sea.

And who were Halcyone and Ceyx? You shall hear while the chest floats on. Halcyone was a fairy maiden, the daughter of the beach and of the wind. And she loved a sailor-boy, and married him; and none on earth were so happy as they. But at last Ceyx was wrecked; and before he could swim to the shore the billows swallowed him up. And Halcyone saw him drowning, and leaped into the sea to him; but in vain. Then the Immortals took pity on them both, and changed them into two fair sea-birds; and now they build a floating nest every year, and sail up and down happily forever upon the pleasant seas of Greece.

So a night passed, and a day, and a long day it was

r Danae; and another night and day beside, till Danae as faint with hunger and weeping, and yet no land appeared. And all the while the babe slept quietly; and last poor Danae drooped her head and fell asleep likewise with her cheek against the babe's.

After a while she was awakened suddenly; for the hest was jarring and grinding, and the air was full of ound. She looked up, and over her head were mighty iffs, all red in the setting sun, and around her rocks nd breakers, and flying flakes of foam. She clasped er hands together, and shrieked aloud for help. And hen she cried, help met her: for now there came over he rocks a tall and stately man, and looked down wonering upon poor Danae tossing about in the chest

you to this island in so frail a ship? Who are you, and whence? Surely you are some king's daughter; and this boy has somewhat more than mortal."

And as he spoke he pointed to the babe; for its face shone like the morning star.

But Danae only held down her head, and sobbed out:

"Tell me to what land I have come, unhappy that I am; and among what men I have fallen!"

And he said, "This isle is called Seriphos, and I am a Hellen, and dwell in it. I am the brother of Polydectes the king; and men call me Dictys the netter, because I catch the fish of the shore."

Then Danae fell down at his feet, and embraced his knees and cried:

"Oh, sir, have pity upon a stranger, whom a cruel doom has driven to your land; and let me live in your house as a servant; but treat me honorably, for I was once a king's daughter, and this my boy (as you have truly said) is of no common race. I will not be a charge to you, or eat the bread of idleness; for I am more skilful in weaving and embroidery than all the maidens of my land."

And she was going on; but Dictys stopped her, and raised her up and said:

"My daughter, I am old, and my hairs are growing gray; while I have no children to make my home cheerful. Come with me, then, and you shall be a daughter to me and to my wife, and this babe shall be our grand-

child. For I fear the gods, and show hospitality to all strangers; knowing that good deeds, like evil ones, always return to those who do them."

So Danae was comforted, and went home with Dictys, the good fisherman, and was a daughter to him and to his wife, till fifteen years were past.

Part II

How Perseus Vowed a Rash Vow

Fifteen years were past and gone, and the babe was now grown to be a tall lad and a sailor, and went many

but greedy, and cunning, and cruel. And when he saw fair Danae, he wanted to marry her. But she would not; for she did not love him, and cared for no one but her boy, and her boy's father, whom she never hoped to see again. At last Polydectes became furious; and while Perseus was away at sea he took poor Danae away from Dictys, saying, "If you will not be my wife, you shall be my slave." So Danae was made a slave, and had to fetch water from the well, and grind in the mill, and perhaps was beaten, and wore a heavy chain, because she would not marry that cruel king. But Perseus was far away, over the seas in the isle of Samos, little thinking how his mother was languishing in grief.

Now one day at Samos, while the ship was lading, Perseus wandered into a pleasant wood to get out of the sun, and sat down on the turf and fell asleep. And as he slept a strange dream came to him—the strangest dream which he had ever had in his life.

There came a lady to him through the wood, taller than he, or any mortal man; but beautiful exceedingly, with great gray eyes, clear and piercing, but strangely soft and mild. On her head was a helmet, and in her hand a spear. And over her shoulder, above her long blue robes, hung a goat-skin, which bore up a mighty shield of brass, polished like a mirror. She stood and looked at him with her clear gray eyes; and Perseus saw that her eyelids never moved, nor her eyeballs, but looked straight through and through him, and into his very heart, as if she could see all the secrets of his soul,

and knew all that he had ever thought or longed for since the day that he was born. And Perseus dropped his eyes, trembling and blushing, as the wonderful lady spoke.

"Perseus, you must do an errand for me."

"Who are you, lady? And how do you know my name?"

"I am Pallas Athené; and I know the thoughts of all men's hearts, and discern their manhood or their baseness. And from the souls of clay I turn away, and they are blest, but not by me. They fatten at ease, like sheep in the pasture, and eat what they did not sow, like oxen in the stall. They grow and spread, like the gourd

which of these two sorts of men seem to you more blest?"

Then Perseus answered boldly: "Better to die in the flower of youth, on the chance of winning a noble name, than to live at ease like the sheep, and die unloved and unrenowned."

Then that strange lady laughed, and held up her brazen shield, and cried: "See here, Perseus; dare you face such a monster as this, and slay it, that I may place its head upon this shield?"

And in the mirror of the shield there appeared a face, and as Perseus looked on it his blood ran cold. It was the face of a beautiful woman; but her cheeks were pale as death, and her brows were knit with everlasting pain, and her lips were thin and bitter like a snake's; and instead of hair, vipers wreathed about her temples, and shot out their forked tongues; while round her head were folded wings like an eagle's, and upon her bosom claws of brass.

And Perseus looked awhile, and then said: "If there is anything so fierce and foul on earth, it were a noble deed to kill it. Where can I find the monster?"

Then the strange lady smiled again, and said: "Not yet; you are too young, and too unskilled; for this is Medusa the Gorgon, the mother of a monstrous brood. Return to your home, and do the work which waits there for you. You must play the man in that before I can think you worthy to go in search of the Gorgon."

Then Perseus would have spoken, but the strange

[illegible] and he awoke: and behold, it was a dream. But [illegible] saw before him the face of that [illegible] with the vipers writhing round her head.

[illegible] and when he came to Seriphus, [illegible] was that his mother was a [illegible] of Polydectes.

[illegible] with rage, he went out, and away to the king's palace, and through the men's rooms, and the women's rooms, and so through all the house (for no one dared stop him), so terrible and fair was he till he found his mother sitting on the floor, turning the stone hand-mill, and weeping as she turned it. And he lifted her up, and kissed her, and bade her follow him forth. But before they could pass out of the room Polydectes came in, raging. And when Perseus saw him, he flew upon him as the mastiff flies on the boar. "Villain and tyrant!" he cried; "is this your respect for the Gods, and thy mercy to strangers and widows? You shall die!" And because he had no sword he caught up the stone hand-mill, and lifted it to dash out Polydectes' brains.

But his mother clung to him, shrieking, "Oh, my son, we are strangers and helpless in the land; and if you kill the king, all the people will fall on us, and we shall both die."

Good Dictys, too, who had come in, entreated him. "Remember that he is my brother. Remember how I have brought you up, and trained you as my own son, and spare him for my sake."

Then Perseus lowered his hand; and Polydectes, who had been trembling all this while like a coward, because he knew that he was in the wrong, let Perseus and his mother pass.

Perseus took his mother to the temple of Athené, and there the priestess made her one of the temple sweepers; for there they knew she would be safe, and not even Polydectes would dare to drag her away from the altar. And there Perseus, and the good Dictys, and his wife, came to visit her every day; while Polydectes, not being able to get what he wanted by force, cast about in his wicked heart how he might get it by cunning.

Now he was sure that he could never get back Danae as long as Perseus was in the island; so he made a plot to rid himself of him. And first he pretended to have forgiven Perseus, and to have forgotten Danae; so that, for a while, all went as smoothly as ever.

Next he proclaimed a great feast, and invited to it all the chiefs, and landowners, and the young men of the island, and among them Perseus, that they might all do him homage as their king, and eat of his banquet in his hall.

On the appointed day they all came; and as the custom was then, each guest brought his present with him to the king: one a horse, another a shawl, or a ring, or a sword; and those who had nothing better brought a basket of grapes, or of game; but Perseus brought nothing, for he had nothing to bring, being but a poor sailor-lad.

He was ashamed, however, to go into the king's

presence without his gift; and he was too proud to ask Dictys to lend him one. So he stood at the door sorrowfully, watching the rich men go in; and his face grew very red as they pointed at him, and smiled, and whispered, "What has that foundling to give?"

Now this was what Polydectes wanted; and as soon as he heard that Perseus stood without, he bade them bring him in, and asked him scornfully before them all, "Am I not your king, Perseus, and have I not invited you to my feast? Where is your present then?"

Perseus blushed and stammered, while all the proud men round laughed, and some of them began jeering him openly. "This fellow was thrown ashore here like a piece of weed or driftwood, and yet he is too proud to

He was half afraid after he had said the words; for all laughed louder than ever, and Polydectes loudest of all.

"You have promised to bring me the Gorgon's head? Then never appear again in this island without it. Go!"

Perseus ground his teeth with rage, for he saw that he had fallen into a trap; but his promise lay upon him, and he went out without a word.

Down to the cliffs he went, and looked across the broad blue sea; and he wondered if his dream were true, and prayed in the bitterness of his soul.

"Pallas Athené, was my dream true? and shall I slay the Gorgon? If thou didst really show me her face, let me not come to shame as a liar and boastful. Rashly and angrily I promised; but cunningly and patiently will I perform."

But there was no answer, nor sign; neither thunder nor any appearance; not even a cloud in the sky.

And three times Perseus called weeping, "Rashly and angrily I promised; but cunningly and patiently will I perform."

Then he saw afar off above the sea a small white cloud, as bright as silver. And it came on, nearer and nearer, till its brightness dazzled his eyes.

Perseus wondered at that strange cloud, for there was no other cloud all round the sky; and he trembled as it touched the cliff below. And as it touched, it broke, and parted, and within it appeared Pallas Athené, as he had seen her at Samos in his dream, and beside her a

young man more light-limbed than the stag, whose eyes were like sparks of fire. By his side was a cimeter of diamond, all of one clear precious stone, and on his feet were golden sandals, from the heels of which grew living wings.

They looked upon Perseus keenly, and yet they never moved their eyes; and they came up the cliffs toward him more swiftly than the seagull, and yet they never moved their feet, nor did the breeze stir the robes about their limbs; only the wings of the youth's sandals quivered, like a hawk's when he hangs above the cliff. And Perseus fell down and worshipped, for he knew that they were more than man.

But Athené stood before him and spake gently, and

Perseus. "Tell me, then, oh tell me, fair and wise Goddess, of your great kindness and condescension, how I can do but this one thing, and then, if need be, die!"

Then Athené smiled and said—

"Be patient, and listen; for if you forget my words, you will indeed die. You must go northward to the country of the Hyperboreans, who live beyond the pole, at the sources of the cold north wind, till you find the three Gray Sisters, who have but one eye and one tooth between them. You must ask them the way to the Nymphs, the daughters of the Evening Star, who dance about the golden tree, in the Atlantic island of the west. They will tell you the way to the Gorgon, that you may slay her, my enemy, the mother of monstrous beasts. Once she was a maiden as beautiful as morn, till in her pride she sinned a sin at which the sun hid his face; and from that day her hair was turned to vipers, and her hands to eagle's claws; and her heart was filled with shame and rage, and her lips with bitter venom; and her eyes became so terrible that whosoever looks on them is turned to stone; and her children are the winged horse and the giant of the golden sword; and her grandchildren are Echidna, the witch adder, and Geryon the three-headed tyrant, who feeds his herds beside the herds of hell. So she became the sister of the Gorgons, Stheino and Eurtye the abhorred, the daughters of the Queen of the Sea. Touch them not, for they are immortal; but bring me only Medusa's head."

"And I will bring it!" said Perseus; "but how am

to escape her eyes? Will she not freeze me too into tone?"

"You shall take this polished shield," said Athené, and when you come near her look not at her herself, but t her image in the brass; so you may strike her safely. And when you have struck off her head, wrap it, with our face turned away, in the folds of the goat-skin on which the shield hangs, the hide of Amaltheié, the nurse f the Ægis-holder. So you will bring it safely back to ne, and win to yourself renown, and a place among the eroes who feast with the Immortals upon the peak where o winds blow."

Then Perseus said, "I will go, though I die in going. But how shall I cross the seas without a ship? And who

And Athené cried, "Now leap from the cliff and be gone."

But Perseus lingered.

"May I not bid farewell to my mother and to Dictys? And may I not offer burnt-offerings to you, and to Hermes the far-famed Argus-slayer, and to Father Zeus above?"

"You shall not bid farewell to your mother, lest your heart relent at her weeping. I will comfort her and Dictys until you return in peace. Nor shall you offer burnt-offerings to the Olympians; for your offering shall be Medusa's head. Leap, and trust in the armor of the Immortals."

Then Perseus looked down the cliff and shuddered; but he was ashamed to show his dread. Then he thought of Medusa and the renown before him, and he leaped into the empty air.

And behold, instead of falling he floated, and stood, and ran along the sky. He looked back, but Athené had vanished, and Hermes; and the sandals led him on northward ever, like a crane who follows the spring toward the Ister fens.

Part III

How Perseus Slew the Gorgon

So Perseus started on his journey, going dry-shod over land and sea; and his heart was high and joyful, for the winged sandals bore him each day a seven days' journey.

And he went by Cythnus, and by Ceos, and the pleasant Cyclades to Attica; and past Athens and Thebes, and the Copaic lake, and up the vale of Cephissus, and past the peaks of Œta and Pindus, and over the rich Thessalian plains, till the sunny hills of Greece were behind him, and before him were the wilds of the north. Then he passed the Thracian mountains, and many a barbarous tribe, Pæons and Dardans and Triballi, till he came to the Ister stream, and the dreary Scythian plains. And he walked across the Ister dry-shod, and away through the moors and fens, day and night toward the bleak northwest, turning neither to the right hand nor the left, till he came to the Unshapen Land, and the place which has no name.

flakes of snow; and it frosted the hair of the three Gray Sisters, and the bones in the ice-cliff above their heads. They passed the eye from one to the other, but for all that they could not see; and they passed the tooth from one to the other, but for all that they could not eat; and they sat in the full glare of the moon, but they were none the warmer for her beams. And Perseus pitied the three Gray Sisters; but they did not pity themselves.

So he said, "Oh, venerable mothers, wisdom is the daughter of old age. You therefore should know many things. Tell me, if you can, the path to the Gorgon."

Then one cried, "Who is this who reproaches us with old age?" And another, "This is the voice of one of the children of men."

And he, "I do not reproach, but honor your old age, and I am one of the sons of men and of the heroes. The rulers of Olympus have sent me to you to ask the way to the Gorgon."

Then one, "There are new rulers in Olympus, and all new things are bad." And another, "We hate your rulers, and the heroes, and all the children of men. We are the kindred of the Titans, and the Giants, and the Gorgons, and the ancient monsters of the deep." And another, "Who is this rash and insolent man who pushes unbidden into our world?" And the first, "There never was such a world as ours, nor will be; if we let him see it, he will spoil it all."

Then one cried, "Give me the eye, that I may see him;" and another, "Give me the tooth, that I may bite

him." But Perseus, when he saw that they were foolish and proud, and did not love the children of men, left off pitying them, and said to himself, "Hungry men must needs be hasty; if I stay making many words here, I shall be starved." Then he stepped close to them, and watched till they passed the eye from hand to hand. And as they groped about between themselves, he held out his own hand gently, till one of them put the eye into it, fancying that it was the hand of her sister. Then he sprang back, and laughed, and cried:

"Cruel and proud old women, I have your eye; and I will throw it into the sea, unless you tell me the path to the Gorgon, and swear to me that you tell me right."

Then they wept, and chattered, and scolded; but in

But Perseus leaped away to the southward, leaving the snow and the ice behind: past the isle of the Hyperboreans, and the tin isles, and the long Iberian shore, while the sun rose higher day by day upon a bright blue summer sea. And the terns and the seagulls swept laughing round his head, and called to him to stop and play, and the dolphins gambolled up as he passed, and offered to carry him on their backs. And all night long the sea-nymphs sang sweetly, and the Tritons blew upon their conchs, as they played round Galatæa their queen, in her car of pearled shells. Day by day the sun rose higher, and leaped more swiftly into the sea at night, and more swiftly out of the sea at dawn; while Perseus skimmed over the billows like a seagull, and his feet were never wetted; and leaped on from wave to wave, and his limbs were never weary, till he saw far away a mighty mountain, all rose-red in the setting sun. Its feet were wrapped in forests, and its head in wreaths of cloud; and Perseus knew that it was Atlas, who holds the heavens and the earth apart.

He came to the mountain, and leaped on shore, and wandered upward, among pleasant valleys and waterfalls, and tall trees and strange ferns and flowers; but there was no smoke rising from any glen, nor house, nor sign of man.

At last he heard sweet voices singing; and he guessed that he was come to the garden of the Nymphs, the daughters of the Evening Star.

They sang like nightingales among the thickets, and

Perseus stopped to hear their song; but the words which they spoke he could not understand; no, nor no man after him for many a hundred years. So he stepped forward and saw them dancing, hand in hand around the charmed tree, which bent under its golden fruit; and round the tree-foot was coiled the dragon, old Ladon the sleepless snake, who lies there forever, listening to the song of the maidens, blinking and watching with dry bright eyes.

Then Perseus stopped, not because he feared the dragon, but because he was bashful before those fair maids; but when they saw him, they too stopped, and called to him with trembling voices:

"Who are you? Are you Heracles the mighty, who

Then they sighed and wept; and answered:

"The Gorgon! she will freeze you into stone."

"It is better to die like a hero than to live like an ox in a stall. The Immortals have lent me weapons, and they will give me wit to use them."

Then they sighed again and answered, "Fair boy, if you are bent on your own ruin, be it so. We know not the way to the Gorgon; but we will ask the giant Atlas, above upon the mountain peak, the brother of our father, the silver Evening Star. He sits aloft and sees across the ocean, and far away into the Unshapen Land."

So they went up the mountain to Atlas their uncle, and Perseus went up with them. And they found the giant kneeling, as he held the heavens and the earth apart.

They asked him, and he answered mildly, pointing to the seaboard with his mighty hand, "I can see the Gorgons lying on an inland far away, but this youth can never come near them, unless he has the hat of darkness, which whosoever wears cannot be seen."

Then cried Perseus, "Where is that hat, that I may find it?"

But the giant smiled. "No living mortal can find that hat, for it lies in the depths of Hades, in the regions of the dead. But my nieces are immortal, and they shall fetch it for you, if you will promise me one thing and keep your faith."

Then Perseus promised; and the giant said, "When you come back with the head of Medusa, you shall show

me the beautiful horror, that I may lose my feeling and my breathing, and become a stone forever; for it is weary labor for me to hold the heavens and the earth apart."

Then Perseus promised; and the eldest of the Nymphs went down, and into a dark cavern among the cliffs, out of which came smoke and thunder, for it was one of the mouths of Hell.

And Perseus and the Nymphs sat down seven days, and waited trembling, till the Nymph came up again; and her face was pale, and her eyes dazzled with the light, for she had been long in the dreary darkness; but in her hand was the magic hat.

Then all the Nymphs kissed Perseus, and wept over

And he saw the three Gorgons sleeping, as huge as elephants. He knew that they could not see him, because the hat of darkness hid him; and yet he trembled as he sank down near them, so terrible were those brazen claws.

Two of the Gorgons were foul as swine, and lay sleeping heavily, as swine sleep, with their mighty wings outspread; but Medusa tossed to and fro restlessly, and as she tossed Perseus pitied her, she looked so fair and sad. Her plumage was like the rainbow, and her face was like the face of a nymph, only her eyebrows were knit, and her lips clenched, with everlasting care and pain; and her long neck gleamed so white in the mirror that Perseus had not the heart to strike, and said, "Ah, that it had been either of her sisters!"

But as he looked, from among her tresses the vipers' heads awoke, and peeped up with their bright dry eyes, and showed their fangs, and hissed; and Medusa, as she tossed, threw back her wings and showed her brazen claws; and Perseus saw that, for all her beauty, she was as foul and venomous as the rest.

Then he came down and stepped to her boldly, and looked steadfastly on his mirror, and struck with Herpé stoutly once; and he did not need to strike again.

Then he wrapped the head in the goat-skin, turning away his eyes, and sprang into the air aloft, faster than he ever sprang before.

For Medusa's wings and talons rattled as she sank dead upon the rocks; and her two foul sisters woke, and saw her lying dead.

Into the air they sprang yelling, and looked for him who had done the deed. Thrice they swung round and round, like hawks who beat for a partridge; and thrice they snuffed round and round, like hounds who draw upon a deer. At last they struck upon the scent of the blood, and they checked for a moment to make sure; and then on they rushed with a fearful howl, while the wind rattled hoarse in their wings.

On they rushed, sweeping and flapping, like eagles after a hare; and Perseus' blood ran cold, for all his courage, as he saw them come howling on his track; and he cried, "Bear me well now, brave sandals, for the hounds of Death are at my heels!"

And well the brave sandals bore him, aloft through

"By what road shall I go homeward again, for I wandered far round in coming hither?"

And they wept and cried, "Go home no more, but stay and play with us, the lonely maidens, who dwell forever far away from gods and men."

But he refused, and they told him his road, and said, "Take with you this magic fruit, which, if you eat once, you will not hunger for seven days. For you must go eastward and eastward ever, over the doleful Lybian shore, which Poseidon gave to Father Zeus, when he burst open the Bosphorus and the Hellespont, and drowned the fair Lectonian land. And Zeus took that land in exchange, a fair bargain, much bad ground for a little good, and to this day it lies waste and desert, with shingle, and rock, and sand."

Then they kissed Perseus, and wept over him, and he leaped down the mountain, and went on, lessening and lessening like a sea-gull, away and out to sea.

Part IV

How Perseus came to the Æthiops

So Perseus flitted onward to the northeast, over many a league of sea, till he came to the rolling sand-hills and the dreary Lybian shore.

And he flitted on across the desert: over rock-ledges, and banks of shingle, and level wastes of sand, and shell-drifts bleaching in the sunshine, and the

skeletons of great sea-monsters, and dead bones of ancient giants, strewn up and down upon the old sea-floor. And as he went the blood drops fell to the earth from the Gorgon's head, and became poisonous asps and adders, which breed in the desert to this day.

Over the sands he went—he never knew how far or how long—feeding on the fruit which the Nymphs had given him, till he saw the hills of the Psylli, and the Dwarfs who fought with cranes. Their spears were of reeds and rushes, and their houses of the egg-shells of the cranes; and Perseus laughed, and went his way to the northeast, hoping all day long to see the blue Mediterranean sparkling, that he might fly across it to his home.

hunger, and his tongue clove to the roof of his mouth. Here and there he fancied that he saw a fair lake, and the sunbeams shining on the water; but when he came to it it vanished at his feet, and there was naught but burning sand. And if he had not been of the race of the Immortals, he would have perished in the waste; but his life was strong within him, because it was more than man's.

Then he cried to Athené, and said:

"Oh, fair and pure, if thou hearest me, wilt thou leave me here to die of drought? I have brought thee the Gorgon's head at thy bidding, and hitherto thou hast prospered my journey; dost thou desert me at the last? Else why will not these immortal sandals prevail, even against the desert storms? Shall I never see my mother more, and the blue ripple round Seriphos, and the sunny hills of Hellas?"

So he prayed; and after he had prayed there was a great silence.

The heaven was still above his head, and the sand was still beneath his feet; and Perseus looked up, but there was nothing but the blinding sun in the blinding blue; and round him, but there was nothing but the blinding sand.

And Perseus stood still a while, and waited, and said, "Surely I am not here without the will of the Immortals, for Athené will not lie. Were not these sandals to lead me in the right road? Then the road in which I have tried to go must be a wrong road."

Then suddenly his ears were opened, and he heard the sound of running water.

And at that his heart was lifted up, though he scarcely dare believe his ears; and weary as he was, he hurried forward, though he could scarcely stand upright; and within a bowshot of him was a glen in the sand, and marble rocks, and date-trees, and a lawn of gay green grass. And through the lawn a streamlet sparkled and wandered out beyond the trees, and vanished in the sand.

The water trickled among the rocks, and a pleasant breeze rustled in the dry date branches; and Perseus laughed for joy, and leaped down the cliff, and drank of the cool water, and ate of the dates, and slept upon the turf,

And he saw cities walled up to heaven, and temples, and obelisks, and pyramids, and giant gods of stone. And he came down amid fields of barley, and flax, and millet, and clambering gourds; and saw the people coming out of the gates of a great city, and setting to work, each in his place, among the water-courses, parting the streams among the plants cunningly with their feet, according to the wisdom of the Egyptians. But when they saw him they all stopped their work, and gathered round him, and cried:

"Who art thou, fair youth? and what bearest thou beneath thy goat-skin there? Surely thou art one of the Immortals; for thy skin is white like ivory, and ours is red like clay. Thy hair is like threads of gold, and ours is black and curled. Surely thou art one of the Immortals"; and they would have worshipped him then and there; but Perseus said:

"I am not one of the Immortals; but I am a hero of the Hellenes. And I have slain the Gorgon in the wilderness, and bear her head with me. Give me food, therefore, that I may go forward and finish my work."

Then they gave him food, and fruit, and wine; but they would not let him go. And when the news came into the city that the Gorgon was slain, the priests came out to meet him, and the maidens, with songs and dances, and timbrels and harps; and they would have brought him to their temple and to their king; but Perseus put on the hat of darkness, and vanished away out of their sight.

Therefore the Egyptians looked long for his return,

but in vain, and worshipped him as a hero, and made a statue of him at Chemmis, which stood for many a hundred years; and they said that he appeared to them at times, with sandals a cubit long; and that whenever he appeared the season was fruitful, and the Nile rose high that year.

Then Perseus went to the eastward, along the Red Sea shore; and then, because he was afraid to go into the Arabian deserts, he turned northward once more, and this time no storm hindered him.

He went past the Isthmus, and Mount Casius, and the vast Serbonian bog, and up the shore of Palestine, where the dark-faced Æthiops dwelt.

He flew on past pleasant hills and valleys, like Argos

So he came near; but when he came, it was no statue, but a maiden of flesh and blood; for he could see her tresses streaming in the breeze; and as he came closer still, he could see how she shrank and shivered when the waves sprinkled her with cold salt spray. Her arms were spread above her head, and fastened to the rock with chains of brass; and her head drooped on her bosom, either with sleep, or weariness, or grief. But now and then she looked up and wailed, and called her mother; yet she did not see Perseus, for the cap of darkness was on his head.

Full of pity and indignation, Perseus drew near and looked upon the maid. Her cheeks were darker than his were, and her hair was blue-black like a hyacinth; but Perseus thought, "I have never seen so beautiful a maiden; no, not in all our isles. Surely she is a king's daughter. Do barbarians treat their kings' daughters thus? She is too fair, at least, to have done any wrong. I will speak to her."

And, lifting the hat from his head, he flashed into her sight. She shrieked with terror, and tried to hide her face with her hair, for she could not with her hands; but Perseus cried:

"Do not fear me, fair one; I am a Hellene, and no barbarian. What cruel men have bound you? But first I will set you free."

And he tore at the fetters, but they were too strong for him; while the maiden cried:

"Touch me not; I am accursed, devoted as a victim

to the sea-gods. They will slay you, if you dare to set me free."

"Let them try," said Perseus; and drawing Herpé from his thigh, he cut through the brass as if it had been flax.

"Now," he said, "you belong to me, and not to these sea gods, whosoever they may be!" But she only called the more on her mother.

"Why call on your mother? She can be no mother to have left you here. If a bird is dropped out of the nest, it belongs to the man who picks it up. If a jewel is cast by the wayside, it is his who dare win it and wear it, as I will win you and will wear you. I know now why Pallas Athené sent me hither. She sent me to gain

quakes, and wasted all the land, and after the floods a monster bred of the slime, who devours all living things. And now he must devour me, guiltless though I am—me who never harmed a living thing, nor saw a fish upon the shore but I gave it life, and threw it back into the sea; for in our land we eat no fish, for fear of Atergatis their queen. Yet the priests say that nothing but my blood can atone for a sin which I never committed."

But Perseus laughed, and said, "A sea-monster? I have fought with worse than him: I would have faced Immortals for your sake; how much more a beast of the sea?"

Then Andromeda looked up at him, and new hope was kindled in her breast, so proud and fair did he stand, with one hand round her, and in the other the glittering sword. But she only sighed, and wept the more, and cried:

"Why will you die, young as you are? Is there not death and sorrow enough in the world already? It is noble for me to die, that I may save the lives of a whole people; but you, better than them all, why should I slay you too? Go you your way; I must go mine."

But Perseus cried, "Not so; for the Lords of Olympus, whom I serve, are the friends of the heroes, and help them on to noble deeds. Led by them, I slew the Gorgon, the beautiful horror; and not without them do I come hither, to slay this monster with that same Gorgon's head. Yet, hide your eyes when I leave you, lest the sight of it freeze you too to stone."

But the maiden answered nothing, for she could not believe his words. And then, suddenly looking up, she pointed to the sea, and shrieked :

"There he comes, with the sunrise, as they promised. I must die now. How shall I endure it? Oh, go! Is it not dreadful enough to be torn piecemeal, without having you to look on?" And she tried to thrust him away.

But he said, "I go; yet promise me one thing ere I go: that if I slay this beast you will be my wife, and come back with me to my kingdom in fruitful Argos, for I am a king's heir. Promise me, and seal it with a kiss."

Then she lifted up her face, and kissed him; and Perseus laughed for joy, and flew upward, while Andromeda crouched trembling on the rock, waiting for

like a shooting star; down to the crests of the waves, while Andromeda hid her face as he shouted; and then there was silence for a while.

At last she looked up trembling, and saw Perseus springing toward her; and instead of the monster a long black rock, with the sea rippling quietly round it.

Who then so proud as Perseus, as he leaped back to the rock, and lifted his fair Andromeda in his arms, and flew with her to the cliff-top, as a falcon carries a dove?

Who so proud as Perseus, and who so joyful as all the Æthiop people? For they had stood watching the monster from the cliffs, wailing for the maiden's fate. And already a messenger had gone to Cepheus and Cassiopœia, where they sat in sackcloth and ashes on the ground, in the innermost palace chambers, awaiting their daughter's end. And they came, and all the city with them, to see the wonder, with songs and with dances, with cymbals and harps, and received their daughter back again, as one alive from the dead.

Then Cepheus said, "Hero of the Hellenes, stay here with me and be my son-in-law, and I will give you the half of my kingdom."

"I will be your son-in-law," said Perseus, "but of your kingdom I will have none, for I long after the pleasant land of Greece, and my mother who waits for me at home."

Then Cepheus said, "You must not take my daughter away at once, for she is to us like one alive from the dead. Stay with us here a year, and after that you shall

return with honor." And Perseus consented; but before he went to the palace he bade the people bring stones and wood, and built three altars, one to Athené, and one to Hermes, and one to Father Zeus, and offered bullocks and rams.

And some said, "This is a pious man"; yet the priests said, "The Sea Queen will be yet more fierce against us, because her monster is slain." But they were afraid to speak aloud, for they feared the Gorgon's head. So they went up to the palace; and when they came in, there stood in the hall Phineus, the brother of Cepheus, chafing like a bear robbed of her whelps, and with him his son, and his servants, and many an armed man; and he cried to Cepheus:

liver her from many." And as he spoke Phineus and all his men-at-arms stopped short, and stiffened each man as he stood; and before Perseus had drawn the goat-skin over the face again, they were all turned into stone.

Then Perseus bade the people bring levers and roll them out; and what was done with them after that I cannot tell.

So they made a great wedding-feast, which lasted seven whole days, and who so happy as Perseus and Andromeda?

But on the eighth night Perseus dreamed a dream; and he saw standing beside him Pallas Athené, as he had seen her in Seriphos, seven long years before; and she stood and called him by name, and said:

"Perseus, you have played the man, and see, you have your reward. Know now that the gods are just, and help him who helps himself. Now give me here Herpé the sword, and the sandals, and the hat of darkness, that I may give them back to their owners; but the Gorgon's head you shall keep awhile, for you will need it in your land of Greece. Then you shall lay it up in my temple at Seriphos, that I may wear it on my shield forever, a terror to the Titans and the monsters, and the foes of gods and men. And as for this land, I have appeased the sea and the fire, and there shall be no more floods nor earthquakes. But let the people build altars to Father Zeus, and to me, and worship the Immortals, the Lords of heaven and earth."

And Perseus rose to give her the sword, and the cap,

nd the sandals; but he woke, and his dream vanished way. And yet it was not altogether a dream; for the oat-skin with the head was in its place; but the sword, nd the cap, and the sandals were gone, and Perseus never aw them more.

Then a great awe fell on Perseus; and he went out n the morning to the people, and told his dream, and ade them build altars to Zeus, the Father of gods and nen, and to Athené, who gives wisdom to heroes; nd fear no more the earthquakes and the floods, but sow nd build in peace. And they did so for a while, and rospered; but after Perseus was gone they forgot Zeus nd Athené, and worshipped again Atergatis the queen, nd the undying fish of the sacred lake, where Deucalion's eluge was swallowed up, and they burned their children

they rowed away. But the remembrance of his brave deed was left behind; and Andromeda's rock was shown at Iopa in Palestine till more than a thousand years were past.

So Perseus and the Phœnicians rowed to the westward, across the sea of Crete, till they came to the blue Ægean and the pleasant Isles of Hellas, and Seriphos, his ancient home.

Then he left his galley on the beach, and went up as of old; and he embraced his mother, and Dictys his good foster-father, and they wept over each other a long while, for it was seven years and more since they had met.

Then Perseus went out, and up to the hall of Polydectes; and underneath the goat-skin he bore the Gorgon's head.

And when he came into the hall, Polydectes sat at the table-head, and all his nobles and landholders on either side, each according to his rank, feasting on the fish and the goat's flesh, and drinking the blood-red wine. The harpers harped, and the revellers shouted, and the wine-cups rang merrily as they passed from hand to hand, and great was the noise in the hall of Polydectes.

Then Perseus stood upon the threshold, and called to the king by name. But none of the guests knew Perseus, for he was changed by his long journey. He had gone out a boy, and he was come home a hero; his eye shone like an eagle's, and his beard was like a lion's beard, and he stood up like a wild bull in his pride.

But Polydectes the wicked knew him, and hardened his heart still more; and scornfully he called:

"Ah, foundling! have you found it more easy to promise than to fulfil?"

"Those whom the gods help fulfil their promises; and those who despise them reap as they have sown. Behold the Gorgon's head!"

Then Perseus drew back the goat-skin, and held aloft the Gorgon's head.

Pale grew Polydectes and his guests as they looked upon that dreadful face. They tried to rise up from their seats: but from their seats they never rose, but stiffened, each man where he sat, into a ring of cold gray stones.

Then Perseus turned and left them, and went down to his galley in the bay; and he gave the kingdom to good

Then Perseus called the Argives together, and told them who he was, and all the noble deeds which he had done. And all the nobles and the yeomen made him king, for they saw that he had a royal heart; and they fought with him against Argos, and took it, and killed Prœtus, and made the Cyclopes serve them, and build them walls round Argos, like the walls which they had built at Tiryns; and there were great rejoicings in the vale of Argos, because they had got a king from Father Zeus.

But Perseus' heart yearned after his grandfather, and he said, "Surely he is my flesh and blood, and he will love me now that I am come home with honor: I will go and find him, and bring him home, and we will reign together in peace."

So Perseus sailed away with his Phœnicians, round Hydrea and Sunium, past Marathon and the Attic shore, and through Euripus, and up the long Eubœan sea, till he came to the town of Larissa, where the wild Pelasgi dwelled.

And when he came there, all the people were in the fields, and there was feasting, and all kinds of games; for Teutamenes, their king, wished to honor Acrisius, because he was the king of a mighty land.

So Perseus did not tell his name, but went up to the games unknown; for he said, "If I carry away the prize in the games, my grandfather's heart will be softened toward me."

So he threw off his helmet and his cuirass, and all his clothes, and stood among the youths of Larissa, while all

wondered at him, and said, "Who is this young stranger, who stands like a wild bull in his pride? Surely he is one of the heroes, the sons of the Immortals, from Olympus."

And when the games began, they wondered yet more; for Perseus was the best man of all at running, and leaping, and wrestling, and throwing the javelin; and he won four crowns, and took them, and then he said to himself, "There is a fifth crown yet to be won: I will win that, and lay them all upon the knees of my grandfather."

And as he spoke, he saw where Acrisius sat, by the side of Teutamenes the king, with his white beard flowing down upon his knees, and his royal staff in his hand;

Then Perseus rent his clothes, and cast dust upon his head, and wept a long while for his grandfather. At last he rose, and called to all the people aloud, and said:

"The gods are true, and what they have ordained must be. I am Perseus, the grandson of this dead man, the far-famed slayer of the Gorgon."

Then he told them how the prophecy had declared that he should kill his grandfather, and all the story of his life.

So they made a great mourning for Acrisius, and burned him on a right rich pile; and Perseus went to the temple, and was purified from the guilt of the death, because he had done it unknowingly.

Then he went home to Argos, and reigned there well with fair Andromeda; and they had four sons and three daughters, and died in a good old age.

And when they died, the ancients say, Athene took them up to the sky, with Cepheus and Cassiopœia. And there on starlight nights you may see them shining still; Cepheus with his kingly crown, and Cassiopœia in her ivory chair, plaiting her star-spangled tresses, and Perseus with the Gorgon's head, and fair Andromeda beside him, spreading her long white arms across the heaven, as she stood when chained to the stone for the monster. All night long they shine, for a beacon to wandering sailors; but all day they feast with the gods, on the still blue peaks of Olympus.

THE ARGONAUTS

By CHARLES KINGSLEY

Part I

How the Centaur Trained the Heroes on Pelion

I HAVE told you of a hero who fought with wild beasts and with wild men; but now I have a tale of heroes who sailed away into a distant land to win themselves renown forever, in the adventure of the Golden Fleece.

Whither they sailed, my children, I cannot clearly

frozen seas; nor did the ladies who went out last year to drudge in the hospitals of the East, making themselves poor, that they might be rich in noble works. And young men, too, whom you know, children, and some of them of your own kin, did they say to themselves, "How much money shall I earn?" when they went out to the war, leaving wealth, and comfort, and a pleasant home, and all that money can give, to face hunger and thirst, and wounds and death, that they might fight for their country and their Queen? No, children, there is a better thing on earth than wealth, a better thing than life itself; and that is, to have done something before you die, for which good men may honor you, and God your Father smile upon your work.

Therefore we will believe—why should we not?—of these same Argonauts of old, that they too were noble men, who planned and did a noble deed; and that therefore their fame has lived, and been told in story and in song, mixed up, no doubt, with dreams and fables, and yet true and right at heart. So we will honor these old Argonauts, and listen to their story as it stands; and we will try to be like them, each of us in our place; for each of us has a Golden Fleece to seek, and a wild sea to sail over ere we reach it, and dragons to fight ere it be ours.

And what was that first Golden Fleece? I do not know, nor care. The old Hellenes said that it hung in Colchis, which we call the Circassian coast, nailed to a beech-tree in the War-god's wood; and that it was the fleece of the wondrous ram who bore Phrixus and Helle

cross the Euxine sea. For Phrixus and Helle were he children of the cloud-nymph, and of Athamas the Minuan king. And when a famine came upon the land, heir cruel stepmother Ino wished to kill them, that her own children might reign, and said that they must be acrificed on an altar, to turn away the anger of the gods. So the poor children were brought to the altar, and the priest stood ready with his knife, when out of the clouds came the Golden Ram, and took them on his back, and vanished. Then madness came upon that foolish king, Athamas, and ruin upon Ino and her children. For Athamas killed one of them in his fury, and Ino fled from him with the other in her arms, and leaped from a cliff into the sea, and was changed into a dolphin, such

and there Helle fell into the sea. So those narrow straits are called "Hellespont," after her; and they bear that name until this day.

Then the ram flew on with Phrixus to the northeast across the sea which we call the Black Sea now; but the Hellenes call it Euxine. And at last, they say, he stopped at Colchis, on the steep Circassian coast; and there Phrixus married Chalciope, the daughter of Aietes the king; and offered the ram in sacrifice; and Aietes nailed the ram's fleece to a beech, in the grove of Ares the War-god.

And after a while Phrixus died, and was buried, but his spirit had no rest; for he was buried far from his native land, and the pleasant hills of Hellas. So he came in dreams to the heroes of the Minuai, and called sadly by their beds, "Come and set my spirit free, that I may go home to my fathers and to my kinsfolk, and the pleasant Minuan land."

And they asked, "How shall we set your spirit free?"

"You must sail over the sea to Colchis, and bring home the golden fleece; and then my spirit will come back with it, and I shall sleep with my fathers and have rest."

He came thus, and called to them often; but when they woke they looked at each other, and said, "Who dare sail to Colchis, or bring home the golden fleece?" And in all the country none was brave enough to try it; for the man and the time were not come.

Phrixus had a cousin called Æson, who was king in Iolcos by the sea. There he ruled over the rich Minuan heroes, as Athamas his uncle ruled in Bœotia; and, like Athamas, he was an unhappy man. For he had a step-brother named Pelias, of whom some said that he was a nymph's son, and there were dark and sad tales about his birth. When he was a babe he was cast out on the mountains, and a wild mare came by and kicked him. But a shepherd passing found the baby, with its face all blackened by the blow; and took him home, and called him Pelias, because his face was bruised and black. And he grew up fierce and lawless, and did many a fearful deed; and at last he drove out Æson his step-brother, and then his own brother Neleus, and took the kingdom

The Argonauts

Above the cliff the snow-wreaths hung, dripping and cracking in the sun; but at its foot around the cave's mouth grew all fair flowers and herbs, as if in a garden, ranged in order, each sort by itself. There they grew gaily in the sunshine, and the spray of the torrent from above; while from the cave came the sound of music, and a man's voice singing to the harp.

Then Æson put down the lad, and whispered:

"Fear not, but go in, and whomsoever you shall find, lay your hands upon his knees and say, 'In the name of Zeus, the father of gods and men, I am your guest from this day forth.'"

Then the lad went in without trembling, for he too was a hero's son; but when he was within, he stopped in wonder to listen to that magic song.

And there he saw the singer lying upon bear-skins and fragrant boughs: Cheiron, the ancient centaur, the wisest of all things beneath the sky. Down to the waist he was a man, but below he was a noble horse; his white hair rolled down over his broad shoulders, and his white beard over his broad brown chest; and his eyes were wise and mild, and his forehead like a mountain wall.

And in his hands he held a harp of gold, and struck it with a golden key; and as he struck, he sang till his eyes glittered, and filled all the cave with light.

And he sang of the birth of Time, and of the heavens and the dancing stars; of the ocean, and the ether, and the fire, and the shaping of the wondrous earth. And he sang of the treasures of the hills, and the hidden

jewels of the mine, and the veins of fire and metal, and the virtues of all healing herbs, and of the speech of birds, and of prophecy, and of hidden things to come.

Then he sang of health, and strength, and manhood, and a valiant heart; and of music, and hunting, and wrestling, and all the games which heroes love; and of travel, and wars, and sieges, and a noble death in fight; and then he sang of peace and plenty, and of equal justice in the land; and as he sang the boy listened wide-eyed, and forgot his errand in the song.

And at the last old Cheiron was silent, and called the lad with a soft voice.

And the lad ran trembling to him, and would have laid his hands upon his knees; but Cheiron smiled, and

afraid of my horse's hoofs, fair boy, or will you be my pupil from this day?"

"I would gladly have horse's hoofs like you, if I could sing such songs as yours."

And Cheiron laughed, and said, "Sit here by me till sundown, when your playfellows will come home, and you shall learn like them to be a king, worthy to rule over gallant men."

Then he turned to Æson, and said, "Go back in peace, and bend before the storm like a prudent man. This boy shall not cross the Anauros again, till he has become a glory to you and to the house of Æolus."

And Æson wept over his son and went away; but the boy did not weep, so full was his fancy of that strange cave, and the centaur, and his song, and the playfellows whom he was to see.

Then Cheiron put the lyre into his hands, and taught him how to play it, till the sun sank low behind the cliff, and a shout was heard outside.

And then in came the sons of the heroes, Æneas, and Heracles, and Peleus, and many another mighty name.

And great Cheiron leaped up joyfully, and his hoofs made the cave resound, as they shouted, "Come out, Father Cheiron; come out and see our game." And one cried, "I have killed two deer"; and another, "I took a wildcat among the crags"; and Heracles dragged a wild goat after him by its horns, for he was as huge as a mountain crag; and Cœneus carried a bear-cub under

each arm, and laughed when they scratched and bit, for neither tooth nor steel could wound him.

And Cheiron praised them all, each according to his deserts.

Only one walked apart and silent, Asclepius, the too-wise child, with his bosom full of herbs and flowers, and round his wrist a spotted snake; he came with downcast eyes to Cheiron, and whispered how he had watched the snake cast its old skin, and grow young again before his eyes, and how he had gone down into a village in the vale, and cured a dying man with a herb which he had seen a sick goat eat.

And Cheiron smiled, and said, "To each Athené and Apollo give some gift, and each is worthy in his place;

ran, and wrestled, and laughed till the stones fell from the cliffs.

Then Cheiron took his lyre, and all the lads joined hands; and as he played, they danced to his measure, in and out, and round and round. There they danced hand in hand, till the night fell over land and sea, while the black glen shone with their broad white limbs and the gleam of their golden hair.

And the lad danced with them, delighted, and then slept a wholesome sleep, upon fragrant leaves of bay, and myrtle, and marjoram, and flowers of thyme; and rose at the dawn, and bathed in the torrent, and became a school-fellow to the heroes' sons, and forgot Iolcos, and his father, and all his former life. But he grew strong, and brave, and cunning, upon the pleasant downs of Pelion, in the keen hungry mountain air. And he learned to wrestle, and to box, and to hunt, and to play upon the harp; and next he learned to ride, for old Cheiron used to mount him on his back; and he learned the virtues of all herbs, and how to cure all wounds; and Cheiron called him Jason the healer, and that is his name until this day.

Part II

How Jason Lost His Sandal in Anauros

And ten years came and went, and Jason was grown to be a mighty man. Some of his fellows were gone, and some were growing up by his side. Asclepius was

gone into Peloponnese to work his wonderous cures on men; and some say he used to raise the dead to life. And Heracles was gone to Thebes to fulfil those famous labors which have become a proverb among men. And Peleus had married a sea-nymph, and his wedding is famous to this day. And Æneas was gone home to Troy, and many a noble tale you will read of him, and of all the other gallant heroes, the scholars of Cheiron the just. And it happened on a day that Jason stood on the mountain, and looked north and south and east and west; and Cheiron stood by him and watched him, for he knew that the time was come.

And Jason looked and saw the plains of Thessaly, where the Lapithai breed their horses; and the lake of

"I would take it and keep it."

"A strong man has taken it and kept it long. Are you stronger than Pelias the terrible?"

"I can try my strength with his," said Jason; but Cheiron sighed, and said:

"You have many a danger to go through before you rule in Iolcos by the sea: many a danger and many a woe; and strange troubles in strange lands, such as man never saw before."

"The happier I," said Jason, "to see what man never saw before."

And Cheiron sighed again, and said, "The eaglet must leave the nest when it is fledged. Will you go to Iolcos by the sea? Then promise me two things before you go."

Jason promised, and Cheiron answered, "Speak harshly to no soul whom you may meet, and stand by the word which you shall speak."

Jason wondered why Cheiron asked this of him; but he knew that the Centaur was a prophet, and saw things long before they came. So he promised, and leaped down the mountain, to take his fortune like a man.

He went down through the arbutus thickets, and across the downs of thyme, till he came to the vineyard walls, and the pomegranates and the olives in the glen; and among the olives roared Anauros, all foaming with a summer flood.

And on the bank of Anauros sat a woman, all wrinkled, gray, and old; her head shook palsied on her breast,

and her hands shook palsied on her knees; and when she saw Jason, she spoke whining, "Who will carry me across the flood?"

Jason was bold and hasty, and was just going to leap into the flood: and yet he thought twice before he leaped, so loud roared the torrent down, all brown from the mountain rains, and silver-veined with melting snow; while underneath he could hear the bowlders rumbling like the tramp of horsemen or the roll of wheels, as they ground along the narrow channel, and shook the rocks on which he stood.

But the old woman whined all the more, "I am weak and old, fair youth. For Hera's sake, carry me over the torrent."

Jason had half a mind to drop her, and let her get through the torrent by herself; but Cheiron's words were in his mind, and he said only, "Patience, mother; the best horse may stumble some day."

At last he staggered to the shore, and set her down upon the bank; and a strong man he needed to have been, or that wild water he never would have crossed.

He lay panting awhile upon the bank, and then leaped up to go upon his journey; but he cast one look at the old woman, for he thought, "She should thank me once at least."

And as he looked, she grew fairer than all women, and taller than all men on earth; and her garments shone like the summer sea, and her jewels like the stars of heaven; and over her forehead was a veil, woven of the golden clouds of sunset; and through the veil she looked down on him, with great soft heifer's eyes; with great eyes, mild and awful, which filled all the glen with light.

And Jason fell upon his knees, and hid his face between his hands.

And she spoke, "I am the Queen of Olympus, Hera the wife of Zeus. As thou hast done to me, so will I do to thee. Call on me in the hour of need, and try if the Immortals can forget."

And when Jason looked up, she rose from off the earth, like a pillar of tall white cloud, and floated away across the mountain peaks, toward Olympus the holy hill.

Then a great fear fell on Jason: but after a while he

grew light of heart; and he blessed old Cheiron, and said, "Surely the Centaur is a prophet, and guessed what would come to pass, when he bade me speak harshly to no soul whom I might meet."

Then he went down toward Iolcos; and as he walked he found that he had lost one of his sandals in the flood.

And as he went through the streets, the people came out to look at him, so tall and fair was he; but some of the elders whispered together; and at last one of them stopped Jason, and called to him, "Fair lad, who are you, and whence come you; and what is your errand in the town?"

"My name, good father, is Jason, and I come from Pelion up above; and my errand is to Pelias your king;

Then Jason laughed a great laugh, like a warhorse in his pride. "Good news, good father, both for you and me. For that very end I came into the town."

Then he strode on toward the palace of Pelias, while all the people wondered at his bearing.

And he stood in the doorway and cried, "Come out, come out, Pelias the valiant, and fight for your kingdom like a man."

Pelias came out wondering, and "Who are you, bold youth?" he cried.

"I am Jason, the son of Æson, the heir of all this land."

Then Pelias lifted up his hands and eyes, and wept, or seemed to weep; and blessed the heavens which had brought his nephew to him, never to leave him more. "For," said he, "I have but three daughters, and no son to be my heir. You shall be my heir then, and rule the kingdom after me, and marry whichsoever of my daughters you shall choose; though a sad kingdom you will find it, and whosoever rules it a miserable man. But come in, come in, and feast."

So he drew Jason in, whether he would or not, and spoke to him so lovingly and feasted him so well, that Jason's anger passed; and after supper his three cousins came into the hall, and Jason thought that he should like well enough to have one of them for his wife.

But at last he said to Pelias, "Why do you look so sad, my uncle? And what did you mean just now when

you said that this was a doleful kingdom, and its ruler a miserable man?"

Then Pelias sighed heavily again and again and again, like a man who had to tell some dreadful story, and was afraid to begin; but at last—

"For seven long years and more have I never known a quiet night; and no more will he who comes after me, till the golden fleece be brought home."

Then he told Jason the story of Phrixus, and of the golden fleece; and told him, too, which was a lie, that Phrixus' spirit tormented him, calling to him day and night. And his daughters came, and told the same tale (for their father had taught them their parts), and wept, and said, "Oh who will bring home the golden fleece,

as you are to me, so will I be to you. Yet why did you drive my father out?"

Pelias smiled, and sighed. "Men have slandered me in that, as in all things. Your father was growing old and weary, and he gave the kingdom up to me of his own will. You shall see him to-morrow, and ask him; and he will tell you the same."

Jason's heart leaped in him when he heard that he was to see his father; and he believed all that Pelias said, forgetting that his father might not dare to tell the truth.

"One thing more there is," said Pelias, "on which I need your advice; for, though you are young, I see in you a wisdom beyond your years. There is one neighbor of mine, whom I dread more than all men on earth. I am stronger than he now, and can command him; but I know that if he stay among us, he will work my ruin in the end. Can you give me a plan, Jason, by which I can rid myself of that man?"

After awhile Jason answered, half laughing, "Were I you, I would send him to fetch that same golden fleece; for if he once set forth after it you would never be troubled with him more."

And at that a bitter smile came across Pelias' lips, and a flash of wicked joy into his eyes; and Jason saw it, and started; and over his mind came the warning of the old man, and his own one sandal, and the oracle, and he saw that he was taken in a trap.

But Pelias only answered gently, "My son, he shall be sent forthwith."

"You mean me?" cried Jason, starting up, "because
came here with one sandal?" And he lifted his fist
ngrily, while Pelias stood up to him like a wolf at bay;
nd whether of the two was the stronger and the fiercer
t would be hard to tell.

But after a moment Pelias spoke gently, "Why then
o rash, my son? You, and not I, have said what is
aid; why blame me for what I have not done? Had
ou bid me love the man of whom I spoke, and make
im my son-in-law and heir, I would have obeyed you;
nd what if I obey you now, and send the man to win
imself immortal fame? I have not harmed you, or him.
One thing at least I know, that he will go, and that
ladly; for he has a hero's heart within him, loving glory,

will perform. It will be no shame to give up my kingdom to the man who wins that fleece."

Then they swore a great oath between them; and afterward both went in, and lay down to sleep.

But Jason could not sleep for thinking of his mighty oath, and how he was to fulfil it, all alone, and without wealth or friends. So he tossed a long time upon his bed, and thought of this plan and of that; and sometimes Phrixus seemed to call him, in a thin voice, faint and low, as if it came from far across the sea, "Let me come home to my fathers and have rest." And sometimes he seemed to see the eyes of Hera, and to hear her words again—"Call on me in the hour of need, and see if the Immortals can forget."

And on the morrow he went to Pelias, and said, "Give me a victim, that I may sacrifice to Hera." So he went up, and offered his sacrifice; and as he stood by the altar Hera sent a thought into his mind; and he went back to Pelias, and said:

"If you are indeed in earnest, give me two heralds, that they may go round to all the princes of the Minuai, who were pupils of the Centaur with me, that we may fit out a ship together, and take what shall befall."

At that Pelias praised his wisdom, and hastened to send the heralds out; for he said in his heart, "Let all the princes go with him, and, like him, never return; for so I shall be lord of all the Minuai, and the greatest king in Hellas."

Heroes of Myth and Legend

Part III

How they built the Ship "Argo" in Iolcos

So the heralds went out, and cried to all the heroes
f the Minuai, "Who dare come to the adventure of
ie golden fleece?"

And Hera stirred the hearts of all the princes, and
ney came from all their valleys to the yellow sands of
agasai. And first came Heracles the mighty, with his
on's skin and club, and behind him Hylas his young
quire, who bore his arrows and his bow; and Tiphys, the
kilful steersman; and Butes, the fairest of all men; and
astor and Polydeuces the twins, the sons of the magic

of mail, and greaves of polished tin to guard their knees in fight; with each man his shield upon his shoulder, of many a fold of tough bull's hide, and his sword of tempered bronze in his silver-studded belt; and in his right hand a pair of lances, of the heavy white ash-staves.

So they came down to Iolcos, and all the city came out to meet them, and were never tired with looking at their height, and their beauty, and their gallant bearing, and the glitter of their inlaid arms. And some said, "Never was such a gathering of the heroes since the Hellenes conquered the land." But the women sighed over them, and whispered, "Alas! they are all going to their death!"

Then they felled the pines on Pelion, and shaped them with the axe, and Argus taught them to build a galley, the first long ship which ever sailed the seas. They pierced her for fifty oars—an oar for each hero of the crew—and pitched her with coal-black pitch, and painted her bows with vermilion; and they named her *Argo* after Argus, and worked at her all day long. And at night Pelias feasted them like a king, and they slept in his palace-porch.

But Jason went away to the northward, and into the land of Thrace, till he found Orpheus, the prince of minstrels, where he dwelt in his cave under Rhodope, among the savage Cicon tribes. And he asked him, "Will you leave your mountains, Orpheus, my fellow-scholar in old times, and cross Strymon once more with me, to sail with the heroes of the Minuai, and bring

home the golden fleece, and charm for us all men and all monsters with your magic harp and song?"

Then Orpheus sighed, "Have I not had enough of toil and of weary wandering far and wide since I lived in Cheiron's cave, above Iolcos by the sea? In vain is the skill and the voice which my goddess mother gave me; in vain have I sung and labored; in vain I went down to the dead, and charmed all the kings of Hades, to win back Eurydice my bride. For I won her, my beloved, and lost her again the same day, and wandered away in my madness, even to Egypt and the Libyan sands, and the isles of all the seas, driven on by the terrible gadfly, while I charmed in vain the hearts of men, and the savage forest beasts, and the trees, and the lifeless stones, with my magic harp and song, giving rest, but finding none. But at last Calliope, my mother, delivered me and brought me home in peace; and I dwell here in the cave alone, among the savage Cicon tribes, softening their wild hearts with music and the gentle laws of Zeus. And now I must go out again to the ends of all the earth, far away into the misty darkness, to the last wave of the Eastern Sea. But what is doomed must be, and a friend's demand obeyed; for prayers are the daughters of Zeus, and who honors them honors him."

Then Orpheus rose up sighing, and took his harp, and went over Strymon. And he led Jason to the southwest, up the banks of Haliacmon and over the spurs of Pindus, to Dodona the town of Zeus, where it stood by the side of the sacred lake, and the fountain which

breathed out fire, in the darkness of the ancient oak-wood, beneath the mountain of the hundred springs. And he led them to the holy oak, where the black dove settled in old times, and was changed into the priestess of Zeus, and gave oracles to all nations round. And he bade him cut down a bough, and sacrifice to Hera and to Zeus; and they took the bough and came to Iolcos, and nailed it to the beakhead of the ship.

And at last the ship was finished and they tried to launch her down the beach; but she was too heavy for them to move her, and her keel sank deep into the sand. Then all the heroes looked at each other blushing; but Jason spoke and said, "Let us ask the magic bough; perhaps it can help us in our need."

Then a voice came from the bough, and Jason heard the words it said, and bade Orpheus play upon the harp, while the heroes waited round, holding the pine-trunk rollers, to help her toward the sea.

Then Orpheus took his harp, and began his magic song: "How sweet it is to ride upon the surges, and to leap from wave to wave, while the wind sings cheerful in the cordage, and the oars flash fast among the foam! How sweet it is to roam across the ocean, and see new towns and wondrous lands, and to come home laden with treasure, and to win undying fame!"

And the good ship *Argo* heard him, and longed to be away and out at sea; till she stirred in every timber, and heaved from stem to stern, and leaped up from the sand upon the rollers, and plunged onward like a gallant

horse; and the heroes fed her path with pine-trunks, till she rushed into the whispering sea.

Then they stored her well with food and water, and pulled the ladder up on board, and settled themselves each man to his oar, and kept time to Orpheus' harp; and away across the bay they rowed southward, while the people lined the cliffs; and the women wept, while the men shouted, at the starting of that gallant crew.

Part IV

How the Argonauts Sailed to Colchis

And what happened next, my children, whether it

wheaten flour, and honey, and wine, and the bitter salt-sea water, and bade the heroes taste. So each tasted the goblet, and passed it round, and vowed an awful vow: and they vowed before the sun, and the night, and the blue-haired sea who shakes the land, to stand by Jason faithfully in the adventure of the golden fleece; and whosoever shrank back, or disobeyed, or turned traitor to his vow, then justice should minister against him, and the Erinnues who track guilty men.

Then Jason lighted the pile, and burned the carcass of the bull; and they went to their ship and sailed eastward, like men who have a work to do; and the place from which they went was called Aphetai, the sailing-place, from that day forth. Three thousand years and more they sailed away, into the unknown Eastern seas; and great nations have come and gone since then, and many a storm has swept the earth; and many a mighty armament, to which *Argo* would be but one small boat; English and French, Turkish and Russian, have sailed those waters since; yet the fame of that small *Argo* lives forever, and her name is become a proverb among men.

So they sailed past the Isle of Sciathos, with the Cape of Sepius on their left, and turned to the northward toward Pelion, up the long Magnesian shore. On their right hand was the open sea, and on their left old Pelion rose, while the clouds crawled round his dark pine-forests, and his caps of summer snow. And their hearts yearned for the dear old mountain, as they thought of

pleasant days gone by, and of the sports of their boyhood, and their hunting, and their schooling in the cave beneath the cliff. And at last Peleus spoke, "Let us land here, friends, and climb the dear old hill once more. We are going on a fearful journey; who knows if we shall see Pelion again? Let us go up to Cheiron our master, and ask his blessing ere we start. And I have a boy, too, with him, whom he trains as he trained me once—the son whom Thetis brought me, the silver-footed lady of the sea, whom I caught in the cave, and tamed her, though she changed her shape seven times. For she changed, as I held her, into water, and to vapor, and to burning flame, and to a rock, and to a black-maned lion, and to a tall and stately tree. But I held

played upon his harp right sweetly, while Cheiron watched and smiled.

Then Cheiron leaped up and welcomed them, and kissed them every one, and set a feast before them of swine's flesh, and venison, and good wine; and young Achilles served them, and carried the golden goblet round. And after supper all the heroes clapped their hands, and called on Orpheus to sing; but he refused, and said, "How can I, who am the younger, sing before our ancient host?" So they called on Cheiron to sing, and Achilles brought him his harp; and he began a wondrous song; a famous story of old time, of the fight between the Centaurs and the Lapithai, which you may still see carved in stone. He sang how his brothers came to ruin by their folly, when they were mad with wine; and how they and the heroes fought, with fists, and teeth, and the goblets from which they drank; and how they tore up the pine-trees in their fury, and hurled great crags of stone, while the mountains thundered with the battle, and the land was wasted far and wide; till the Lapithai drove them from their home in the rich Thessalian plains to the lonely glens of Pindus, leaving Cheiron all alone. And the heroes praised his song right heartily; for some of them had helped in that great fight.

Then Orpheus took the lyre, and sang of Chaos, and the making of the wondrous World, and how all things sprang from Love, who could not live alone in the Abyss. And as he sang, his voice rose from the cave, above the crags, and through the tree-tops, and the glens of oak

and pine. And the trees bowed their heads when they heard it, and the gray rocks cracked and rang, and the forest beasts crept near to listen, and the birds forsook their nests and hovered round. And old Cheiron clapped his hands together, and beat his hoofs upon the ground, for wonder at that magic song.

Then Peleus kissed his boy, and wept over him, and they went down to the ship; and Cheiron came down with them, weeping, and kissed them one by one, and blessed them, and promised to them great renown. And the heroes wept when they left him, till their great hearts could weep no more; for he was kind and just and pious, and wiser than all beasts and men. Then he went up to a cliff, and prayed for them, that they might come home

Troy, and Virgil how he sailed away and founded Rome; and men believed until late years that from him sprang our old British kings. Now Cyzicus, the songs say, welcomed the heroes, for his father had been one of Cheiron's scholars; so he welcomed them, and feasted them, and stored their ship with corn and wine, and cloaks and rugs, the songs say, and shirts, of which no doubt they stood in need.

But at night, while they lay sleeping, came down on them terrible men, who lived with the bears in the mountains, like Titans or giants in shape; for each of them had six arms, and they fought with young firs and pines. But Heracles killed them all before morn with his deadly poisoned arrows; but among them, in the darkness, he slew Cyzicus the kindly prince.

Then they got to their ship and to their oars, and Tiphys bade them cast off the hawsers and go to sea. But as he spoke a whirlwind came, and spun the *Argo* round, and twisted the hawsers together, so that no man could loose them. Then Tiphys dropped the rudder from his hand, and cried, "This comes from the gods above." But Jason went forward, and asked counsel of the magic bough.

Then the magic bough spoke, and answered, "This is because you have slain Cyzicus your friend. You must appease his soul, or you will never leave this shore."

Jason went back sadly, and told the heroes what he had heard. And they leaped on shore, and searched till

dawn ; and at dawn they found the body, all rolled in dust and blood, among the corpses of those monstrous beasts. And they wept over their kind host, and laid him on a fair bed, and heaped a huge mound over him, and offered black sheep at his tomb, and Orpheus sang a magic song to him, that his spirit might have rest. And then they held games at the tomb, after the custom of those times, and Jason gave prizes to each winner. To Ancæus he gave a golden cup, for he wrestled best of all ; and to Heracles a silver one, for he was the strongest of all ; and to Castor, who rode best, a golden crest ; and Polydeuces the boxer had a rich carpet, and to Orpheus for his song a sandal with golden wings. But Jason himself was the best of all the archers, and the Minuai

in hand, to hunt wild deer; and Hylas the fair boy slipped away after him, and followed him by stealth, until he lost himself among the glens, and sat down weary to rest himself by the side of a lake; and there the water nymphs came up to look at him, and loved him, and carried him down under the lake to be their playfellow, forever happy and young. And Heracles sought for him in vain, shouting his name till all the mountains rang; but Hylas never heard him, far down under the sparkling lake. So while Heracles wandered searching for him, a fair breeze sprang up, and Heracles was nowhere to be found; and the *Argo* sailed away, and Heracles was left behind, and never saw the noble Phasian stream.

Then the Minuai came to a doleful land, where Amycus the giant ruled, and cared nothing for the laws of Zeus, but challenged all strangers to box with him, and those whom he conquered he slew. But Polydeuces the boxer struck him a harder blow than he ever felt before, and slew him; and the Minuai went on up the Bosphorus, till they came to the city of Phineus, the fierce Bithynian king; for Zetes and Calais bade Jason land there, because they had a work to do.

And they went up from the shore toward the city, through forests white with snow; and Phineus came out to meet them with a lean and woful face, and said, "Welcome, gallant heroes, to the land of bitter blasts, the land of cold and misery; yet I will feast you as best I can." And he led them in, and set meat before them;

but before they could put their hands to their mouths, down came two fearful monsters, the like of whom man never saw; for they had the faces and the hair of fair maidens, but the wings and claws of hawks; and they snatched the meat from off the table, and flew shrieking out above the roofs.

Then Phineus beat his breast and cried, "These are the Harpies, whose names are the Whirlwind and the Swift, the daughters of Wonder and of the Amber-nymph, and they rob us night and day. They carried off the daughters of Pandareus, whom all the gods had blessed; for Aphrodite fed them on Olympus with honey and milk and wine; and Hera gave them beauty and wisdom, and Athené skill in all the arts; but when

rage, at the bidding of an evil woman, and cast them out upon the rocks? Swear to us that you will right our sister, and cast out that wicked woman; and then we will free you from your plague, and drive the whirlwind maidens to the south; but if not, we will put out your eyes, as you put out the eyes of your own sons."

Then Phineus swore an oath to them, and drove out the wicked woman; and Jason took those two poor children, and cured their eyes with magic herbs.

But Zetes and Calais rose up sadly and said, "Farewell now, heroes all; farewell, our dear companions, with whom we played on Pelion in old times; for a fate is laid upon us, and our day is come at last, in which we must hunt the whirlwinds over land and sea forever; and if we catch them they die, and if not, we die ourselves."

At that all the heroes wept; but the two young men sprang up, and aloft into the air after the Harpies, and the battle of the winds began.

The heroes trembled in silence as they heard the shrieking of the blasts; while the palace rocked and all the city, and great stones were torn from the crags, and the forest pines were hurled earthward, north and south and east and west, and the Bosphorus boiled white with foam, and the clouds were dashed against the cliffs.

But at last the battle ended, and the Harpies fled screaming toward the south, and the sons of the North-wind rushed after them, and brought clear sunshine where they passed. For many a league they followed them, over all the isles of the Cyclades, and away to the

southwest across Hellas, till they came to the Ionian Sea, and there they fell upon the Echinades, at the mouth of the Achelous; and those isles were called the Whirlwind Isles for many a hundred years. But what became of Zetes and Calais I know not, for the heroes never saw them again: and some say that Heracles met them, and quarrelled with them, and slew them with his arrows; and some say that they fell down from weariness and the heat of the summer sun, and that the Sun-god buried them among the Cyclades, in the pleasant Isle of Tenos; and for many hundred years their grave was shown there, and over it a pillar, which turned to every wind. But those dark storms and whirlwinds haunt the Bosphorus until this day.

But the Argonauts went eastward, and out into the open sea, which we now call the Black Sea, but it was called the Euxine then. No Hellene had ever crossed it, and all feared that dreadful sea, and its rocks, and shoals, and fogs, and bitter freezing storms; and they told strange stories of it, some false and some half true, how it stretched northward to the ends of the earth, and the sluggish Putrid Sea, and the everlasting night, and the regions of the dead. So the heroes trembled, for all their courage, as they came into that wild Black Sea, and saw it stretching out before them, without a shore, as far as eye could see.

And first Orpheus spoke, and warned them, "We shall come now to the wandering blue rocks; my mother warned me of them, Calliope, the immortal muse."

And soon they saw the blue rocks shining like spires and castles of gray glass, while an ice-cold wind blew from them and chilled all the heroes' hearts. And as they neared they could see them heaving, as they rolled upon the long sea waves, crashing and grinding together, till the roar went up to heaven. The sea sprang up in spouts between them, and swept round them in white sheets of foam; but their heads swung nodding high in air, while the wind whistled shrill among the crags.

The heroes' hearts sank within them, and they lay upon their oars in fear; but Orpheus called to Tiphys the helmsman, "Between them we must pass; so look ahead for an opening, and be brave, for Hera is with us." But Tiphys the cunning helmsman stood silent, clenching his teeth, till he saw a heron come flying mast-high toward the rocks, and hover awhile before them, as if looking for a passage through. Then he cried, "Hera has sent us a pilot; let us follow the cunning bird."

Then the heron flapped to and fro a moment, till he saw a hidden gap, and into it he rushed like an arrow, while the heroes watched what would befall.

And the blue rocks clashed together as the bird flew swiftly through; but they struck but a feather from his tail, and then rebounded apart at the shock.

Then Tiphys cheered the heroes, and they shouted; and the oars bent like withes beneath their strokes as they rushed between those toppling ice-crags and the cold blue lips of death. And ere the rocks could meet

again they had passed them, and were safe out in the open sea.

And after that they sailed on wearily along the Asian coast, by the Black Cape and Thyneis, where the hot stream of Thymbris falls into the sea, and Sangarius, whose waters float on the Euxine, till they came to Wolf the river, and to Wolf the kindly king. And there died two brave heroes, Idmon and Tiphys the wise helmsman: one died of an evil sickness, and one a wild boar slew. So the heroes heaped a mound above them, and set upon it an oar on high, and left them there to sleep together, on the far-off Lycian shore. But Idas killed the boar, and avenged Tiphys; and Ancaios took the rudder and was helmsman, and steered them on toward the east.

And they went on past Sinope, and many a mighty river's mouth, and past many a barbarous tribe, and the cities of the Amazons, the warlike women of the East, till all night they heard the clank of anvils and roar of furnace-blasts, and the forge-fires shone like sparks through the darkness in the mountain glens aloft; for they were come to the shores of the Chalybes, the smiths who never tire, but serve Ares the cruel War-god, forging weapons day and night.

And at day-dawn they looked eastward, and midway between the sea and the sky they saw white snow-peaks hanging, glittering sharp and bright above the clouds. And they knew that they were come to Caucasus, at the end of all the earth: Caucasus the highest of all mountains, the father of the rivers of the East. On this peak

lies chained the Titan, while a vulture tears his heart; and at his feet are piled dark forests round the magic Colchian land.

And they rowed three days to the eastward, while Caucasus rose higher hour by hour, till they saw the dark stream of Phasis rushing headlong to the sea, and, shining above the tree-tops, the golden roofs of King Aietes, the child of the Sun.

Then out spoke Ancaios the helmsman, "We are come to our goal at last, for there are the roofs of Aietes, and the woods where all poisons grow; but who can tell us where among them is hid the golden fleece? Many a toil must we bear ere we find it, and bring it home to Greece."

But Jason cheered the heroes, for his heart was high and bold; and he said, "I will go alone up to Aietes, though he be the child of the Sun, and win him with soft words. Better so than to go all together, and to come to blows at once." But the Minuai would not stay behind, so they rowed boldly up the stream.

And a dream came to Aietes, and filled his heart with fear. He thought he saw a shining star, which fell into his daughter's lap; and that Medeia his daughter took it gladly, and carried it to the riverside, and cast it in, and there the whirling river bore it down, and out into the Euxine Sea.

Then he leaped up in fear, and bade his servants bring his chariot, that he might go down to the riverside and appease the nymphs, and the heroes whose spirits

haunt the bank. So he went down in his golden chariot, and his daughters by his side, Medeia the fair witch-maiden, and Chalciope, who had been Phrixus' wife, and behind him a crowd of servants and soldiers, for he was a rich and mighty prince.

And as he drove down by the reedy river he saw *Argo* sliding up beneath the bank, and many a hero in her, like Immortals for beauty and for strength, as their weapons glittered round them in the level morning sunlight, through the white mist of the stream. But Jason was the noblest of all; for Hera, who loved him, gave him beauty and tallness and terrible manhood.

And when they came near together and looked into each other's eyes the heroes were awed before Aietes as he shone in his chariot, like his father the glorious Sun; for his robes were of rich gold tissue, and the rays of his diadem flashed fire; and in his hand he bore a jewelled sceptre, which glittered like the stars; and sternly he looked at them under his brows, and sternly he spoke and loud:

"Who are you, and what want you here, that you come to the shore of Cutaia? Do you take no account of my rule, nor of my people the Colchians who serve me, who never tired yet in the battle, and know well how to face an invader?"

And the heroes sat silent awhile before the face of that ancient king. But Hera the awful goddess put courage into Jason's heart, and he rose and shouted loudly in answer, "We are no pirates nor lawless men.

We come not to plunder and to ravage, or carry away slaves from your land; but my uncle, the son of Poseidon, Pelias the Minuan king, he it is who has set me on a quest to bring home the golden fleece. And these too, my bold comrades, they are no nameless men; for some are the sons of Immortals, and some of heroes far renowned. And we too never tire in battle, and know well how to give blows and to take: yet we wish to be guests at your table: it will be better so for both."

Then Aietes' rage rushed up like a whirlwind, and his eyes flashed fire as he heard; but he crushed his anger down in his breast, and spoke mildly a cunning speech:

"If you will fight for the fleece with my Colchians, then many a man must die. But do you indeed expect to win from me the fleece in fight? So few you are that if you be worsted I can load your ship with your corpses. But if you will be ruled by me, you will find it better far to choose the best man among you, and let him fulfil the labors which I demand. Then I will give him the golden fleece for a prize and a glory to you all."

So saying, he turned his horses and drove back in silence to the town. And the Minuai sat silent with sorrow, and longed for Heracles and his strength; for there was no facing the thousands of the Colchians and the fearful chance of war.

But Chalciope, Phrixus' widow, went weeping to the town; for she remembered her Minuan husband, and all the pleasures of her youth, while she watched the fair

ces of his kinsmen, and their long locks of golden hair. nd she whispered to Medeia her sister, "Why should these brave men die? why does not my father give em up the fleece, that my husband's spirit may have st?"

And Medeia's heart pitied the heroes, and Jason ost of all; and she answered, "Our father is stern d terrible, and who can win the golden fleece?" But alciope said, "These men are not like our men; there nothing which they cannot dare nor do."

And Medeia thought of Jason and his brave counte- nce, and said, "If there was one among them who knew fear, I could show him how to win the fleece."

So in the dusk of evening they went down to the erside Chalciope and Medeia the witch-maiden and

to have sailed all these seas in vain." Then both the princesses besought him; but Jason said, "It is too late."

"But you know not," said Medeia, "what he must do who would win the fleece. He must tame the two brazen-footed bulls, who breathe devouring flame; and with them he must plow ere nightfall four acres in the field of Ares; and he must sow them with serpents' teeth, of which each tooth springs up into an armed man. Then he must fight with all those warriors; and little will it profit him to conquer them, for the fleece is guarded by a serpent, more huge than any mountain pine; and over his body you must step if you would reach the golden fleece."

Then Jason laughed bitterly. "Unjustly is that fleece kept here, and by an unjust and lawless king; and unjustly shall I die in my youth, for I will attempt it ere another sun be set."

Then Medeia trembled, and said, "No mortal man can reach that fleece unless I guide him through. For round it, beyond the river, is a wall full nine ells high, with lofty towers and buttresses, and mighty gates of threefold brass; and over the gates the wall is arched, with golden battlements above. And over the gateway sits Brimo, the wild witch-huntress of the woods, brandishing a pine-torch in her hands, while her mad hounds howl around. No man dare meet her or look on her, but only I her priestess, and she watches far and wide lest any stranger should come near."

" No wall so high but it may be climbed at last, and
o wood so thick but it may be crawled through; no
rpent so wary but he may be charmed, or witch-queen
fierce but spells may soothe her; and I may yet win
e golden fleece, if a wise maiden help bold men."

And he looked at Medeia cunningly, and held her
th his glittering eye, till she blushed and trembled, and
id:

" Who can face the fire of the bull's breath, and fight
n thousand armed men?"

" He whom you help," said Jason, flattering her, " for
our fame is spread over all the earth. Are you not the
ueen of all enchantresses, wiser even than your sister
rce, in her fairy island in the West?"

" Would that I were with my sister Circe in her fairy

Then Jason fell on his knees before her, and thanked her and kissed her hands; and she gave him the vase of ointment, and fled trembling through the reeds. And Jason told his comrades what had happened, and showed them the box of ointment; and all rejoiced but Idas, and he grew mad with envy.

And at sunrise Jason went and bathed, and anointed himself from head to foot, and his shield, and his helmet, and his weapons, and bade his comrades try the spell. So they tried to bend his lance, but it stood like an iron bar; and Idas in spite hewed at it with his sword, but the blade flew to splinters in his face. Then they hurled their lances at his shield, but the spear-points turned like lead; and Caineus tried to throw him, but he never stirred a foot; and Polydeuces struck him with his fist a blow which would have killed an ox, but Jason only smiled, and the heroes danced about him with delight; and he leaped, and ran, and shouted in the joy of that enormous strength, till the sun rose, and it was time to go and to claim Aietes' promise.

So he sent up Telamon and Aithalides to tell Aietes that he was ready for the fight; and they went up among the marble walls, and beneath the roofs of gold, and stood in Aietes' hall, while he grew pale with rage.

"Fulfil your promise to us, child of the blazing Sun. Give us the serpents' teeth, and let loose the fiery bulls; for we have found a champion among us who can win the golden fleece."

And Aietes bit his lips, for he fancied that they had

fled away by night: but he could not go back from his promise; so he gave them the serpents' teeth.

Then he called for his chariot and his horses, and sent heralds through all the town; and all the people went out with him to the dreadful War-god's field.

And there Aietes sat upon his throne, with his warriors on each hand, thousands and tens of thousands, clothed from head to foot in steel chain-mail. And the people and the women crowded to every window and bank and wall; while the Minuai stood together, a mere handful in the midst of that great host.

And Chalciope was there and Argus, trembling, and Medeia, wrapped closely in her veil; but Aietes did not know that she was muttering cunning spells between her lips.

Then Jason cried, "Fulfil your promise, and let your fiery bulls come forth."

Then Aietes bade open the gates, and the magic bulls leaped out. Their brazen hoofs rang upon the ground, and their nostrils sent out sheets of flame, as they rushed with lowered heads upon Jason; but he never flinched a step. The flame of their breath swept round him, but it singed not a hair of his head; and the bulls stopped short and trembled when Medeia began her spell.

Then Jason sprang upon the nearest and seized him by the horn; and up and down they wrestled, till the bull fell grovelling on his knees; for the heart of the brute died within him, and his mighty limbs were loosed,

beneath the steadfast eye of that dark witch-maiden and the magic whisper of her lips.

So both the bulls were tamed and yoked; and Jason bound them to the plow, and goaded them onward with his lance till he had plowed the sacred field.

And all the Minuai shouted; but Aietes bit his lips with rage, for the half of Jason's work was over, and the sun was yet high in heaven.

Then he took the serpents' teeth and sowed them, and waited what would befall. But Medeia looked at him and at his helmet, lest he should forget the lesson she had taught.

And every furrow heaved and bubbled, and out of every clod arose a man. Out of the earth they rose by thousands, each clad from head to foot in steel, and drew their swords and rushed on Jason, where he stood in the midst alone.

Then the Minuai grew pale with fear for him; but Aietes laughed a bitter laugh. "See! if I had not warriors enough already round me, I could call them out of the bosom of the earth."

But Jason snatched off his helmet, and hurled it into the thickest of the throng. And blind madness came upon them, suspicion, hate, and fear; and one cried to his fellow, "Thou didst strike me!" and another, "Thou art Jason; thou shalt die!" So fury seized those earth-born phantoms, and each turned his hand against the rest; and they fought and were never weary, till they all lay dead upon the ground. Then the magic furrows

opened, and the kind earth took them home into her breast; and the grass grew up all green again above them, and Jason's work was done.

Then the Minuai rose and shouted, till Prometheus heard them from his crag. And Jason cried, "Lead me to the fleece this moment, before the sun goes down."

But Aietes thought, "He has conquered the bulls, and sown and reaped the deadly crop. Who is this who is proof against all magic? He may kill the serpent yet." So he delayed, and sat taking counsel with his princes till the sun went down and all was dark. Then he bade a herald cry, "Every man to his home for to-night. To-morrow we will meet these heroes, and speak about the golden fleece."

Then he turned and looked at Medeia. "This is your doing, false witch-maid! You have helped these yellow-haired strangers, and brought shame upon your father and yourself!"

Medeia shrank and trembled, and her face grew pale with fear; and Aietes knew that she was guilty, and whispered, "If they win the fleece, you die!"

But the Minuai marched toward their ship, growling like lions cheated of their prey; for they saw that Aietes meant to mock them, and to cheat them out of all their toil. And Oileus said, "Let us go to the grove together, and take the fleece by force."

And Idas the rash cried, "Let us draw lots who shall go in first; for, while the dragon is devouring one, the

rest can slay him and carry off the fleece in peace." But Jason held them back, though he praised them; for he hoped for Medeia's help.

And after a while Medeia came trembling, and wept a long while before she spoke. And at last:

"My end is come, and I must die; for my father has found out that I have helped you. You he would kill if he dared; but he will not harm you, because you have been his guests. Go, then, go, and remember poor Medeia when you are far away across the sea." But all the heroes cried:

"If you die, we die with you; for without you we cannot win the fleece, and home we will not go without it, but fall here fighting to the last man."

"You need not die," said Jason. "Flee home with us across the sea. Show us first how to win the fleece; for you can do it. Why else are you the priestess of the grove? Show us but how to win the fleece, and come with us, and you shall be my queen, and rule over the rich princes of the Minuai, in Iolcos by the sea."

And all the heroes pressed round, and vowed to her that she should be their queen.

Medeia wept, and shuddered, and hid her face in her hands; for her heart yearned after her sisters and her playfellows, and the home where she was brought up as a child. But at last she looked up at Jason, and spoke between her sobs:

"Must I leave my home and my people, to wander with strangers across the sea? The lot is cast, and I must

dure it. I will show you how to win the golden fleece. ring up your ship to the wood-side, and moor her there ainst the bank; and let Jason come up at midnight, d one brave comrade with him, and meet me beneath e wall."

Then all the heroes cried together, "I will go!" and I!" "and I!" And Idas the rash grew mad with vy; for he longed to be foremost in all things. But ledeia calmed them, and said, "Orpheus shall go with son, and bring his magic harp; for I hear of him that is the king of all minstrels, and can charm all things earth."

And Orpheus laughed for joy, and clapped his hands, cause the choice had fallen on him; for in those days ets and singers were as bold warriors as the best

trembled, and Medeia hid her eyes. And at last the witch-queen vanished, and fled with her hounds into the woods; and the bars of the gates fell down, and the brazen doors flew wide, and Medeia and the heroes ran forward and hurried through the poison wood, among the dark stems of the mighty beeches, guided by the gleam of the golden fleece, until they saw it hanging on one vast tree in the midst. And Jason would have sprung to seize it; but Medeia held him back, and pointed, shuddering, to the tree-foot, where the mighty serpent lay, coiled in and out among the roots, with a body like a mountain pine. His coils stretched many a fathom, spangled with bronze and gold; and half of him they could see, but no more, for the rest lay in the darkness beyond.

And when he saw them coming he lifted up his head, and watched them with his small bright eyes, and flashed his forked tongue, and roared like the fire among the woodlands, till the forest tossed and groaned. For his cries shook the trees from leaf to root, and swept over the long reaches of the river, and over Aietes' hall, and woke the sleepers in the city, till mothers clasped their children in their fear.

But Medeia called gently to him, and he stretched out his long spotted neck, and licked her hand, and looked up in her face, as if to ask for food. Then she made a sign to Orpheus, and he began his magic song.

And as he sung, the forest grew calm again, and the leaves on every tree hung still; and the serpent's head

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sank down, and his brazen coils grew limp, and his glittering eyes closed lazily, till he breathed as gently as a child, while Orpheus called to pleasant Slumber, who gives peace to men, and beasts, and waves.

Then Jason leaped forward warily, and stepped across that mighty snake, and tore the fleece from off the tree-trunk; and the four rushed down the garden, to the bank where the *Argo* lay.

There was a silence for a moment, while Jason held the golden fleece on high. Then he cried, "Go now, good *Argo*, swift and steady, if ever you would see Pelion more."

And she went, as the heroes drove her, grim and silent all, with muffled oars, till the pinewood bent like

breakers like a horse, till the heroes stopped all panting, each man upon his oar, as she slid into the still broad sea.

Then Orpheus took his harp and sang a pæan, till the heroes' hearts rose high again; and they rowed on stoutly and steadfastly, away into the darkness of the West.

Part V

How the Argonauts were Driven into the Unknown Sea

So they fled away in haste to the westward; but Aietes manned his fleet and followed them. And Lynceus the quick-eyed saw him coming, while he was still many a mile away, and cried, "I see a hundred ships, like a flock of white swans, far in the east." And at that they rowed hard, like heroes; but the ships came nearer every hour. Then Medeia, the dark witch-maiden, laid a cruel and a cunning plot; for she killed Absyrtus, her young brother, and cast him into the sea, and said, "Ere my father can take up his corpse and bury it, he must wait long, and be left far behind."

And all the heroes shuddered, and looked one at the other for shame; yet they did not punish that dark witch-woman, because she had won for them the golden fleece.

And when Aietes came to the place he saw the floating corpse; and he stopped a long while, and bewailed his son, and took him up, and went home. But he sent

on his sailors toward the westward, and bound them by a mighty curse, "Bring back to me that dark witch-woman, that she may die a dreadful death. But if you return without her, you shall die by the same death yourselves."

So the Argonauts escaped for that time: but Father Zeus saw that foul crime; and out of the heavens he sent a storm, and swept the ship far from her course. Day after day the storm drove her, amid foam and blinding mist, till they knew no longer where they were, for the sun was blotted from the skies. And at last the ship struck on a shoal, amid low isles of mud and sand, and the waves rolled over her and through her, and the heroes lost all hope of life.

Then Jason cried to Hera, "Fair queen, who hast

full. Vengeance waits for her, slow and sure; but she must live, for you need her still. She must show you the way to her sister Circe, who lives among the islands of the West. To her you must sail, a weary way, and she shall cleanse you from your guilt."

Then all the heroes wept aloud when they heard the sentence of the oak; for they knew that a dark journey lay before them, and years of bitter toil. And some upbraided the dark witch-woman, and some said, "Nay; we are her debtors still; without her we should never have won the fleece." But most of them bit their lips in silence, for they feared the witch's spells.

And now the sea grew calmer, and the sun shone out once more, and the heroes thrust the ship off the sand-bank, and rowed forward on their weary course under the guiding of the dark witch-maiden, into the wastes of the unknown sea.

Whither they went I cannot tell, nor how they came to Circe's isle. Some say that they went to the westward, and up the Ister stream, and so came into the Adriatic, dragging their ship over the snowy Alps. And others say that they went southward, into the Red Indian Sea, and past the sunny lands where spices grow, round Æthiopia toward the West; and that at last they came to Libya, and dragged their ship across the burning sands, and over the hills into the Syrtes, where the flats and quicksands spread for many a mile, between rich Cyrene and the Lotus-eaters' shore. But all these are but dreams and fables, and dim hints of unknown lands.

But all say that they came to a place where they had to drag their ship across the land nine days with ropes and rollers, till they came into an unknown sea. And the best of all the old songs tells us how they went away toward the North, till they came to the slope of Caucasus, where it sinks into the sea; and the narrow Cimmerian Bosphorus, where the Titan swam across upon the bull; and thence into the lazy waters of the still Mæotid lake. And thence they went northward ever, up the Tanais, which we call Don, past the Geloni and Sauromatai, and many a wandering shepherd-tribe, and the one-eyed Arimaspi, of whom old Greek poets tell, who steal the gold from the Griffins, in the cold Riphaian hills.

And they passed the Scythian archers, and the Tauri

righteous of all nations; and to the gates of the world below, and to the dwelling-place of dreams.

And at last Ancaios shouted, "Endure a little while, brave friends, the worst is surely past; for I can see the pure west winds ruffle the water, and hear the roar of ocean on the sands. So raise up the mast, and set the sail, and face what comes like men."

Then out spoke the magic bough, "Ah, would that I had perished long ago, and been whelmed by the dread blue rocks, beneath the fierce swell of the Euxine! Better so, than to wander forever, disgraced by the guilt of my princes; for the blood of Absyrtus still tracks me, and woe follows hard upon woe. And now some dark horror will clutch me, if I come near the Isle of Ierne. Unless you will cling to the land, and sail southward and southward forever, I shall wander beyond the Atlantic, to the ocean which has no shore."

Then they blessed the magic bough, and sailed southward along the land. But ere they could pass Ierne, the land of mists and storms, the wild wind came down, dark and roaring, and caught the sail, and strained the ropes. And away they drove twelve nights, on the wide wild western sea, through the foam, and over the rollers, while they saw neither sun nor stars. And they cried again, "We shall perish, for we know not where we are. We are lost in the dreary damp darkness, and cannot tell north from south."

But Lynceus the long-sighted called gayly from the bows, "Take heart again, brave sailors; for I see a pine-

clad isle, and the halls of the kind Earth-mother, with a crown of clouds around them."

But Orpheus said, "Turn from them, for no living man can land there: there is no harbor on the coast, but steep-walled cliffs all round."

So Ancaios turned the ship away; and for three days more they sailed on, till they came to Aiaia, Circe's home, and the fairy island of the West.

And there Jason bid them land, and seek about for any sign of living man. And as they went inland Circe met them, coming down toward the ship; and they trembled when they saw her, for her hair, and face, and robes shone like flame.

And she came and looked at Medeia; and Medeia

Pillars of Hercules, and the Mediterranean Sea. And thence they sailed on through the deeps of Sardinia, and past the Ausonian islands, and the capes of the Tyrrhenian shore, till they came to a flowery island, upon a still bright summer's eve. And as they neared it, slowly and wearily, they heard sweet songs upon the shore. But when Medeia heard it, she started, and cried, "Beware, all heroes, for these are the rocks of the Sirens. You must pass close by them, for there is no other channel; but those who listen to that song are lost."

Then Orpheus spoke, the king of all minstrels, "Let them match their song against mine. I have charmed stones, and trees, and dragons, how much more the hearts of men!"

So he caught up his lyre, and stood upon the poop, and began his magic song.

And now they could see the Sirens on Anthemousa, the flowery isle; three fair maidens sitting on the beach, beneath a red rock in the setting sun, among beds of crimson poppies and golden asphodel. Slowly they sang and sleepily, with silver voices, mild and clear, which stole over the golden waters, and into the hearts of all the heroes, in spite of Orpheus' song.

And all things stayed around and listened; the gulls sat in white lines along the rocks; on the beach great seals lay basking, and kept time with lazy heads; while silver shoals of fish came up to hearken, and whispered as they broke the shining calm. The Wind overhead hushed his whistling, as he shepherded his clouds toward

the west; and the clouds stood in mid blue, and listened dreaming, like a flock of golden sheep.

And as the heroes listened, the oars fell from their hands, and their heads drooped on their breasts, and they closed their heavy eyes; and they dreamed of bright still gardens, and of slumbers under murmuring pines, till all their toil seemed foolishness, and they thought of their renown no more.

Then one lifted his head suddenly, and cried, "What use in wandering forever? Let us stay here and rest awhile." And another, "Let us row to the shore, and hear the words they sing." And another, "I care not for the words, but for the music. They shall sing me to sleep, that I may rest."

And Butes, the son of Pandion, the fairest of all

him over land and sea, and how he slew the loathly Gorgon, and won himself a peerless bride; and how he sits now with the gods upon Olympus, a shining star in the sky, immortal with his immortal bride, and honored by all men below.

So Orpheus sang, and the Sirens, answering each other across the golden sea, till Orpheus' voice drowned the Sirens', and the heroes caught their oars again.

And they cried, "We will be men like Perseus, and we will dare and suffer to the last. Sing us his song again, brave Orpheus, that we may forget the Sirens and their spell."

And as Orpheus sang, they dashed their oars into the sea, and kept time to his music, as they fled fast away; and the Sirens' voices died behind them, in the hissing of the foam along their wake.

But Butes swam to the shore, and knelt down before the Sirens, and cried, "Sing on! sing on!" But he could say no more, for a charmed sleep came over him, and a pleasant humming in his ears; and he sank all along upon the pebbles, and forgot all heaven and earth, and never looked at that sad beach around him, all strewn with the bones of men.

Then slowly rose up those three fair sisters, with a cruel smile upon their lips; and slowly they crept down toward him, like leopards who creep upon their prey; and their hands were like the talons of eagles as they stepped across the bones of their victims to enjoy their cruel feast.

But fairest Aphrodite saw him from the highest Idalian peak, and she pitied his youth and his beauty, and leaped up from her golden throne; and like a falling star she cleft the sky, and left a trail of glittering light, till she stooped to the Isle of the Sirens, and snatched their prey from their claws. And she lifted Butes as he lay sleeping, and wrapped him in a golden mist; and she bore him to the peak of Lilybæum, and he slept there many a pleasant year.

But when the Sirens saw that they were conquered, they shrieked for envy and rage, and leaped from the beach into the sea, and were changed into rocks until this day.

Then they came to the straits by Lilybæum, and saw Sicily, the three-cornered island, under which Enceladus

And when Orpheus saw it he groaned, and struck his hands together. And "Little will it help us," he cried, "to escape the jaws of the whirlpool; for in that cave lies Scylla, the sea-hag with a young whelp's voice; my mother warned me of her ere we sailed away from Hellas; she has six heads, and six long necks, and hides in that dark cleft. And from her cave she fishes for all things which pass by—for sharks, and seals, and dolphins, and all the herds of Amphitrite. And never ship's crew boasted that they came safe by her rock, for she bends her long necks down to them, and every mouth takes up a man. And who will help us now? For Hera and Zeus hate us, and our ship is foul with guilt; so we must die, whatever befalls."

Then out of the depths came Thetis, Peleus' silver-footed bride, for love of her gallant husband, and all her nymphs around her; and they played like snow-white dolphins, diving on from wave to wave, before the ship, and in her wake, and beside her, as dolphins play. And they caught the ship, and guided her, and passed her on from hand to hand, and tossed her through the billows, as maidens toss the ball. And when Scylla stopped to seize her, they struck back her ravening heads, and foul Scylla whined, as a whelp whines, at the touch of their gentle hands. But she shrank into her cave affrighted—for all bad things shrink from good—and *Argo* leaped safe past her, while a fair breeze rose behind. Then Thetis and her nymphs sank down to their coral caves beneath the sea, and their gardens of green and purple,

where live flowers bloom all the year round; while the heroes went on rejoicing, yet dreading what might come next.

After that they rowed on steadily for many a weary day, till they saw a long high island, and beyond it a mountain land. And they searched till they found a harbor, and there rowed boldly in. But after a while they stopped, and wondered, for there stood a great city on the shore, and temples and walls and gardens, and castles high in air upon the cliffs. And on either side they saw a harbor, with a narrow mouth, but wide within; and black ships without number, high and dry upon the shore.

Then Ancaios, the wise helmsman, spoke, "What new wonder is this? I know all isles, and harbors, and

thought ourselves a gallant crew when we sailed from Iolcos by the sea; but how small we look before this city, like an ant before a hive of bees."

Then the sailors hailed them roughly from the quay:

"What men are you?—we want no strangers here, pirates. We keep our business to ourselves."

But Jason answered gently, with many a flattering word, and praised their city and their harbor, and their fleet of gallant ships. "Surely you are the children of Poseidon, and the masters of the sea; and we are but poor wandering mariners, worn out with thirst and toil. Give us but food and water, and we will go on our voyage in peace."

Then the sailors laughed, and answered, "Stranger, you are no fool; you talk like an honest man, and you shall find us honest too. We are the children of Poseidon, and the masters of the sea; but come ashore to us, and you shall have the best that we can give."

So they limped ashore, all stiff and weary, with long ragged beards and sunburned cheeks, and garments torn and weather-stained, and weapons rusted with the spray, while the sailors laughed at them (for they were rough-tongued, though their hearts were frank and kind). And one said, "These fellows are but raw sailors; they look as if they had been sea-sick all the day." And another, "Their legs have grown crooked with much rowing, till they waddle in their walk like ducks."

At that Idas the rash would have struck them; but

Jason held him back, till one of the merchant kings spoke to them, a tall and stately man.

"Do not be angry, strangers; the sailor boys must have their jest. But we will treat you justly and kindly, for strangers and poor men come from God; and you seem no common sailors by your strength, and height, and weapons. Come up with me to the palace of Alcinous, the rich sea-going king, and we will feast you well and heartily; and after that you shall tell us your name."

But Medeia hung back, and trembled, and whispered in Jason's ear, "We are betrayed, and are going to our ruin, for I see my countrymen among the crowd; dark-eyed Colchi in steel mail-shirts, such as they wear in my father's land."

"It is too late to turn," said Jason. And he spoke

round the square worked the shipwrights, as many in number as ants, twining ropes, and hewing timber, and smoothing long yards and oars. And the Minuai went on in silence through clean white marble streets, till they came to the hall of Alcinous, and they wondered then still more. For the lofty palace shone aloft in the sun, with walls of plated brass, from the threshold to the innermost chamber, and the doors were of silver and gold. And on each side of the doorway sat living dogs of gold, who never grew old or died, so well Hephaistos had made them in his forges in smoking Lemnos, and gave them to Alcinous to guard his gates by night. And within, against the walls, stood thrones on either side, down the whole length of the hall, strewn with rich glossy shawls; and on them the merchant kings of those crafty sea-roving Phæaces sat eating and drinking in pride, and feasting there all the year round. And boys of molten gold stood each on a polished altar, and held torches in their hands, to give light all night to the guests. And round the house sat fifty maid-servants, some grinding the meal in the mill, some turning the spindle, some weaving at the loom, while their hands twinkled as they passed the shuttle, like quivering aspen leaves.

And outside before the palace a great garden was walled round, filled full of stately fruit-trees, gray olives and sweet figs, and pomegranates, pears and apples, which bore the whole year round. For the rich southwest wind fed them, till pear grew ripe on pear, fig on fig, and grape

on grape, all the winter and the spring. And at the fur-
her end gay flower-beds bloomed through all seasons of
he year; and two fair fountains rose, and ran, one through
he garden grounds, and one beneath the palace gate, to
vater all the town. Such noble gifts the heavens had
given to Alcinous the wise.

So they went in, and saw him sitting, like Poseidon,
on his throne, with his golden sceptre by him, in gar-
ments stiff with gold, and in his hand a sculptured goblet,
s he pledged the merchant kings; and beside him stood
Arete, his wise and lovely queen, and leaned against a
pillar as she spun her golden threads.

Then Alcinous rose, and welcomed them, and bade
hem sit and eat; and the servants brought them tables,
nd bread, and meat, and wine.

Then Arete frowned, and said, "Lead this girl in, my maidens; and let the kings decide, not I."

And Alcinous leaped up from his throne, and cried, "Speak, strangers, who are you? And who is this maiden?"

"We are the heroes of the Minuai," said Jason; "and this maiden has spoken truth. We are the men who took the golden fleece, the men whose fame has run round every shore. We came hither out of the ocean, after sorrows such as man never saw before. We went out many, and come back few, for many a noble comrade have we lost. So let us go, as you should let your guests go, in peace; that the world may say, 'Alcinous is a just king.'"

But Alcinous frowned, and stood deep in thought; and at last he spoke:

"Had not the deed been done which is done, I should have said this day to myself, 'It is an honor to Alcinous, and to his children after him, that the far-famed Argonauts are his guests.' But these Colchi are my guests, as you are; and for this month they have waited here with all their fleet, for they have hunted all the seas of Hellas, and could not find you, and dared neither go further, nor go home."

"Let them choose out their champions, and we will fight them, man for man."

"No guests of ours shall fight upon our island, and if you go outside they will outnumber you. I will do justice between you, for I know and do what is right."

Then he turned to his kings, and said, "This may stand over till to-morrow. To-night we will feast our guests, and hear the story of all their wanderings, and how they came hither out of the ocean."

So Alcinous bade the servants take the heroes in, and bathe them, and give them clothes. And they were glad when they saw the warm water, for it was long since they had bathed. And they washed off the sea-salt from their limbs, and anointed themselves from head to foot with oil, and combed out their golden hair. Then they came back again into the hall, while the merchant kings rose up to do them honor. And each man said to his neighbor, "No wonder that these men won fame. How they stand now like Giants, or Titans, or Immortals come down from Olympus, though many a winter has worn them, and many a fearful storm. What must they have been when they sailed from Iolcos, in the bloom of their youth, long ago?"

Then they went out to the garden; and the merchant princes said, "Heroes, run races with us. Let us see whose feet are nimblest."

"We cannot race against you, for our limbs are stiff from sea: and we have lost our two swift comrades, the sons of the north wind. But do not think us cowards: if you wish to try our strength, we will shoot, and box, and wrestle, against any men on earth."

And Alcinous smiled, and answered, "I believe you, gallant guests; with your long limbs and broad shoulders, we could never match you here. For we care noth-

ing here for boxing, or for shooting with the bow; but for feasts, and songs, and harping, and dancing, and running races, to stretch our limbs on shore."

So they danced there and ran races, the jolly merchant kings, till the night fell, and all went in.

And then they ate and drank, and comforted their weary souls, till Alcinous called a herald, and bade him go and fetch the harper.

The herald went out, and fetched the harper, and led him in by the hand; and Alcinous cut him a piece of meat, from the fattest of the haunch, and sent it to him, and said, "Sing to us, noble harper, and rejoice the heroes' hearts."

So the harper played and sang, while the dancers danced strange figures; and after that the tumblers showed their tricks, till the heroes laughed again.

Then, "Tell me, heroes," asked Alcinous, "you who have sailed the ocean round, and seen the manners of all nations, have you seen such dancers as ours here, or heard such music and such singing? We hold ours to be the best on earth."

"Such dancing we have never seen," said Orpheus; "and your singer is a happy man, for Phœbus himself must have taught him, or else he is the son of a Muse, as I am also, and have sung once or twice, though not so well as he."

"Sing to us, then, noble stranger," said Alcinous; "and we will give you precious gifts."

So Orpheus took his magic harp, and sang to them

stirring song of their voyage from Iolcos, and their angers, and how they won the golden fleece; and of Medeia's love, and how she helped them, and went with hem over land and sea; and of all their fearful dangers, rom monsters, and rocks, and storms, till the heart of Arete was softened, and all the women wept. And the herchant kings rose up, each man from off his golden hrone, and clapped their hands, and shouted, "Hail to he noble Argonauts, who sailed the unknown sea!"

Then he went on, and told their journey over the luggish northern main, and through the shoreless outer cean, to the fairy island of the west; and the Sirens, nd Scylla, and Charybdis, and all the wonders they had een, till midnight passed and the day dawned; but the ings never thought of sleep. Each man sat still and

songs cannot alter justice; and I must be faithful to my name. Alcinous I am called, the man of sturdy sense; and Alcinous I will be." But for all that Arete besought him, until she won him round.

So next morning he sent a herald, and called the kings into the square, and said, "This is a puzzling matter; remember but one thing. These Minuai live close by us, and we may meet them often on the seas; but Aietes lives afar off, and we have only heard his name. Which, then, of the two is it safer to offend—the men near us, or the men far off?"

The princes laughed, and praised his wisdom; and Alcinous called the heroes to the square, and the Colchi also; and they came and stood opposite each other, but Medeia stayed in the palace. Then Alcinous spoke, "Heroes of the Colchi, what is your errand about this lady?"

"To carry her home with us, that she may die a shameful death; but if we return without her, we must die the death she should have died."

"What say you to this, Jason the Æolid?" said Alcinous, turning to the Minuai.

"I say," said the cunning Jason, "that they are come here on a bootless errand. Do you think that you can make her follow you, heroes of the Colchi—her, who knows all spells and charms? She will cast away your ships on quicksands, or call down on you Brimo the wild huntress; or the chains will fall from off her wrists, and she will escape in her dragon-car; or if not

... she has a thousand plans and
... come at all, brave heroes, and
... the Bosphorus, and the
... double all your toil? There is
... these coasts, which waits for gal-
... Better to settle there, and build a
... Jews and Colchis help themselves."

... murmur arose among the Colchi, and some
... she has spoken well"; and some, "We have
... enough of roving, we will sail the seas no more!"
... chief said at last, "Be it so, then; a plague she
... has been to us, and a plague to the house of her father,
... a plague she will be to you. Take her, since you
... are no wiser; and we will sail away toward the north."

Then Alcinous gave them food, and water, and garments, and rich presents of all sorts; and he gave the same to the Minuai, and sent them all away in peace.

So Jason kept the dark witch-maiden to breed him woe and shame; and the Colchi went northward into the Adriatic, and settled, and built towns along the shore.

Then the heroes rode away to the eastward, to reach Hellas, their beloved land; but a storm came down upon them, and swept them far away toward the south. And they rowed till they were spent with struggling, through the darkness and the blinding rain; but where they were they could not tell, and they gave up all hope of life. And at last they touched the ground, and when daylight came they waded to the shore; and saw nothing round but sand and desolate salt pools, for they had come

to the quicksands of the Syrtis, and the dreary treeless flats which lie between Numidia and Cyrene, on the burning shore of Africa. And there they wandered starving for many a weary day, ere they could launch their ship again, and gain the open sea. And there Canthus was killed, while he was trying to drive off sheep, by a stone which a herdsman threw.

And there too Mopsus died, the seer who knew the voices of all birds; but he could not foretell his own end, for he was bitten in the foot by a snake, one of those which sprang from the Gorgon's head when Perseus carried it across the sands.

At last they rowed away toward the northward, for many a weary day, till their water was spent, and their food eaten; and they were worn out with hunger and thirst. But at last they saw a long steep island, and a blue peak high among the clouds; and they knew it for the peak of Ida, and the famous land of Crete. And they said, "We will land in Crete, and see Minos the just king, and all his glory and his wealth; at least he will treat us hospitably, and let us fill our water-casks upon the shore."

But when they came nearer to the island they saw a wondrous sight upon the cliffs. For on a cape to the westward stood a giant, taller than any mountain pine, who glittered aloft against the sky like a tower of burnished brass. He turned and looked on all sides round him, till he saw the *Argo* and her crew; and when he saw them he came toward them, more swiftly than the swiftest

horse, leaping across the glens at a bound, and striding at one step from down to down. And when he came abreast of them he brandished his arms up and down, as a ship hoists and lowers her yards, and shouted with his brazen throat like a trumpet from off the hills, "You are pirates, you are robbers! If you dare land here, you die."

Then the heroes cried, "We are no pirates. We are all good men and true, and all we ask is food and water;" but the giant cried the more:

"You are robbers, you are pirates all; I know you; and if you land, you shall die the death."

Then he waved his arms again as a signal, and they saw the people flying inland, driving their flocks before

Then all the heroes cried, "What shall we do, wise Medeia? We must have water, or we die of thirst. Flesh and blood we can face fairly; but who can face this red-hot brass?"

"I can face red-hot brass, if the tale I hear be true. For they say that he has but one vein in all his body, filled with liquid fire; and that this vein is closed with a nail: but I know not where that nail is placed. But if I can get it once into these hands, you shall water your ship here in peace."

Then she bade them put her on shore, and row off again, and wait what would befall.

And the heroes obeyed her unwillingly, for they were ashamed to leave her so alone; but Jason said, "She is dearer to me than to any of you, yet I will trust her freely on shore; she has more plots than we can dream of in the windings of that fair and cunning head."

So they left the witch-maiden on the shore; and she stood there in her beauty all alone, till the giant strode back red-hot from head to heel, while the grass hissed and smoked beneath his tread.

And when he saw the maiden alone, he stopped; and she looked boldly up into his face without moving, and began her magic song:

"Life is short, though life is sweet; and even men of brass and fire must die. The brass must rust, the fire must cool, for time gnaws all things in their turn. Life is short, though life is sweet: but sweeter to live forever; sweeter to live ever youthful like the gods, who

have ichor in their veins—ichor which gives life, and youth, and joy, and a bounding heart."

Then Talus said, "Who are you, strange maiden, and where is this ichor of youth?"

Then Medeia held up a flask of crystal, and said, "Here is the ichor of youth. I am Medeia the enchantress; my sister Circe gave me this, and said, 'Go and reward Talus, the faithful servant, for his fame is gone out into all lands.' So come, and I will pour this into your veins, that you may live forever young."

And he listened to her false words, that simple Talus, and came near; and Medeia said, "Dip yourself in the sea first, and cool yourself, lest you burn my tender hands; then show me where the nail in your vein is, that I may pour the ichor in."

Then that simple Talus dipped himself in the sea, till it hissed, and roared, and smoked; and came and kneeled before Medeia, and showed her the secret nail.

And she drew the nail out gently, but she poured no ichor in; and instead the liquid fire spouted forth, like a stream of red-hot iron. And Talus tried to leap up, crying, "You have betrayed me, false witch-maiden!" But she lifted up her hands before him, and sang, till he sank beneath her spell. And as he sank, his brazen limbs clanked heavily, and the earth groaned beneath his weight; and the liquid fire ran from his heel, like a stream of lava, to the sea; and Medeia laughed, and called to the heroes, "Come ashore, and water your ship in peace."

So they came, and found the giant lying dead; and

they fell down, and kissed Medeia's feet; and watered their ship, and took sheep and oxen, and so left that inhospitable shore.

At last, after many more adventures, they came to the Cape of Malea, at the southwest point of the Peloponnese. And there they offered sacrifices, and Orpheus purged them from their guilt. Then they rode away again to the northward, past the Laconian shore, and came all worn and tired by Sunium, and up the long Eubœan Strait, until they saw once more Pelion, and Aphetai, and Iolcos by the sea.

And they ran the ship ashore; but they had no strength left to haul her up the beach; and they crawled out on the pebbles, and sat down, and wept till they could weep no more. For the houses and the trees were all altered; and all the faces which they saw were strange; and their joy was swallowed up in sorrow, while they thought of their youth, and all their labor, and the gallant comrades they had lost.

And the people crowded round, and asked them, "Who are you, that you sit weeping here?"

"We are the sons of your princes, who sailed out many a year ago. We went to fetch the golden fleece, and we have brought it, and grief therewith. Give us news of our fathers and our mothers, if any of them be left alive on earth."

Then there was shouting, and laughing, and weeping; and all the kings came to the shore, and they led away the heroes to their homes, and bewailed the valiant dead.

Then Jason went up with Medeia to the palace of his uncle Pelias. And when he came in Pelias sat by the hearth, crippled and blind with age; while opposite him sat Æson, Jason's father, crippled and blind likewise; and the two old men's heads shook together as they tried to warm themselves before the fire.

And Jason fell down at his father's knees, and wept, and called him by his name. And the old man stretched his hands out and felt him, and said, "Do not mock me, young hero. My son Jason is dead long ago at sea."

"I am your own son Jason, whom you trusted to the Centaur upon Pelion; and I have brought home the golden fleece, and a princess of the Sun's race for my bride. So now give me up the kingdom, Pelias,

taken a wicked wife, and he had to bear his burden to the last.

And first she laid a cunning plot to punish that poor old Pelias, instead of letting him die in peace.

For she told his daughters, "I can make old things young again; I will show you how easy it is to do." So she took an old ram and killed him, and put him in a caldron with magic herbs; and whispered her spells over him, and he leaped out again a young lamb. So that "Medeia's caldron" is a proverb still, by which we mean times of war and change, when the world has become old and feeble, and grows young again through bitter pains.

Then she said to Pelias's daughters, "Do to your father as I did to this ram, and he will grow young and strong again."

But she only told them half the spell; so they failed, while Medeia mocked them; and poor old Pelias died, and his daughters came to misery. But the songs say she cured Æson, Jason's father, and he became young and strong again.

But Jason could not love her, after all her cruel deeds. So he was ungrateful to her, and wronged her; and she revenged herself on him. And a terrible revenge she took—too terrible to speak of here. But you will hear of it yourselves when you grow up, for it has been sung in noble poetry and music; and whether it be true or not, it stands forever as a warning to us not to seek for help from evil persons, or to gain good ends by

evil means. For if we use an adder even against our enemies, it will turn again and sting us.

But of all the other heroes there is many a brave tale left, which I have no space to tell you, so you must read them for yourselves: of the hunting of the boar in Calydon, which Meleager killed; and of Heracles' twelve famous labors; and of the seven who fought at Thebes; and of the noble love of Castor and Polydeuces, the twin Dioscouroi—how when one died the other would not live without him, so they shared their immortality between them; and Zeus changed them into the two twin stars which never rise both at once.

And what became of Cheiron, the good immortal beast? That, too, is a sad story; for the heroes never

tal men." So Cheiron gave him his immortality, and died, and had rest from pain. And Heracles and Prometheus wept over him, and went to bury him on Pelion; but Zeus took him up among the stars, to live forever, grand and mild, low down in the far southern sky.

And in time the heroes died, all but Nestor, the silver-tongued old man; and left behind them valiant sons, but not so great as they had been. Yet their fame, too, lives till this day, for they fought at the ten years' siege of Troy: and their story is in the book which we call Homer, in two of the noblest songs on earth—the "Iliad," which tells us of the siege of Troy, and Achilles' quarrel with the kings; and the "Odyssey," which tells the wanderings of Odysseus, through many lands for many years, and how Alcinous sent him home at last, safe to Ithaca his beloved island, and to Penelope his faithful wife, and Telemachus his son, and Euphorbus the noble swineherd, and the old dog who licked his hand and died. We will read that sweet story, children, by the fire some winter night.

THE CHIMÆRA

By NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

ONCE, in the old, old times (for all the strange things which I tell you about happened long before anybody can remember), a fountain gushed out of a hill-side, in the marvellous land of Greece. And, for aught I know, after so many thousand years, it is still gushing out of the very selfsame spot. At any rate, there was the pleasant fountain, welling freshly forth and sparkling adown the hill-side, in the golden sunset, when a handsome young man named Bellerophon drew near its margin. In his hand he held a bridle, studded with brilliant gems, and adorned with a golden bit. Seeing an old man, and another of middle age, and a little boy, near the fountain, and likewise a maiden, who was dipping up some of the water in a pitcher, he paused, and begged that he might refresh himself with a draught.

"This is very delicious water," he said to the maiden as he rinsed and filled her pitcher, after drinking out of it. "Will you be kind enough to tell me whether the fountain has any name?"

"Yes; it is called the Fountain of Pirene," answered the maiden; and then she added, "My grandmother has told me that this clear fountain was once a beautiful woman; and when her son was killed by the arrows of

the huntress Diana, she melted all away into tears. And so the water, which you find so cool and sweet, is the sorrow of that poor mother's heart!"

"I should not have dreamed," observed the young stranger, "that so clear a well-spring, with its gush and gurgle, and its cheery dance out of the shade into the sunlight, had so much as one tear-drop in its bosom! And this, then, is Pirene? I thank you, pretty maiden, for telling me its name. I have come from a far-away country to find this very spot."

A middle-aged country fellow (he had driven his cow to drink out of the spring) stared hard at young Bellerophon, and at the handsome bridle which he carried in his hand.

"The water-courses must be getting low, friend, in your part of the world," remarked he, "if you come so far only to find the Fountain of Pirene. But, pray, have you lost a horse? I see you carry the bridle in your hand; and a very pretty one it is with that double row of bright stones upon it. If the horse was as fine as the bridle, you are much to be pitied for losing him."

"I have lost no horse," said Bellerophon, with a smile. "But I happen to be seeking a very famous one, which, as wise people have informed me, must be found hereabouts, if anywhere. Do you know whether the winged horse Pegasus still haunts the Fountain of Pirene, as he used to do in your forefathers' days?"

But then the country fellow laughed.

Some of you, my little friends, have probably heard

that this Pegasus was a snow-white steed, with beautiful silvery wings, who spent most of his time on the summit of Mount Helicon. He was as wild, and as swift, and as buoyant, in his flight through the air, as any eagle that ever soared into the clouds. There was nothing else like him in the world. He had no mate; he never had been backed or bridled by a master; and, for many a long year, he led a solitary and a happy life.

Oh, how fine a thing it is to be a winged horse! Sleeping at night, as he did, on a lofty mountain-top, and passing the greater part of the day in the air, Pegasus seemed hardly to be a creature of the earth. Whenever he was seen, up very high above people's heads, with the sunshine on his silvery wings, you would have thought

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In the summer-time, and in the beautifullest of weather, Pegasus often alighted on the solid earth, and, closing his silvery wings, would gallop over hill and dale for pastime, as fleetly as the wind. Oftener than in any other place, he had been seen near the Fountain of Pirene, drinking the delicious water, or rolling himself upon the soft grass of the margin. Sometimes, too (but Pegasus was very dainty in his food), he would crop a few of the clover-blossoms that happened to be sweetest.

To the Fountain of Pirene, therefore, people's great-grandfathers had been in the habit of going (as long as they were youthful, and retained their faith in winged horses), in hopes of getting a glimpse at the beautiful Pegasus. But, of late years, he had been very seldom seen. Indeed, there were many of the country folks, dwelling within half an hour's walk of the fountain, who had never beheld Pegasus, and did not believe that there was any such creature in existence. The country fellow to whom Bellerophon was speaking chanced to be one of those incredulous persons.

And that was the reason why he laughed.

"Pegasus, indeed!" cried he, turning up his nose as high as such a flat nose could be turned up—"Pegasus, indeed! A winged horse, truly! Why, friend, are you in your senses? Of what use would wings be to a horse? Could he drag the plow so well, think you? To be sure, there might be a little saving in the expense of shoes; but then, how would a man like to see his horse flying out of the stable window?—yes, or whisking him

up above the clouds, when he only wanted to ride to mill? No, no! I don't believe in Pegasus. There never was such a ridiculous kind of a horse-fowl made!"

"I have some reason to think otherwise," said Bellerophon, quietly.

And then he turned to an old, gray man, who was leaning on a staff, and listening very attentively, with his head stretched forward, and one hand at his ear, because, for the last twenty years, he had been getting rather deaf.

"And what say you, venerable sir?" inquired he. "In your younger days, I should imagine, you must frequently have seen the winged steed!"

"Ah, young stranger, my memory is very poor!" said the aged man. "When I was a lad, if I remember

"Once I thought I saw him," replied the maiden, with a smile and a blush. "It was either Pegasus, or a large white bird, a very great way up in the air. And one other time, as I was coming to the fountain with my pitcher, I heard a neigh. Oh, such a brisk and melodious neigh as that was! My very heart leaped with delight at the sound. But it startled me, nevertheless; so that I ran home without filling my pitcher."

"That was truly a pity!" said Bellerophon.

And he turned to the child, whom I mentioned at the beginning of the story, and who was gazing at him, as children are apt to gaze at strangers, with his rosy mouth wide open.

"Well, my little fellow," cried Bellerophon, playfully pulling one of his curls, "I suppose you have often seen the winged horse."

"That I have," answered the child, very readily. "I saw him yesterday, and many times before."

"You are a fine little man!" said Bellerophon, drawing the child closer to him. "Come, tell me all about it."

"Why," replied the child, "I often come here to sail little boats in the fountain, and to gather pretty pebbles out of its basin. And sometimes, when I look down into the water, I see the image of the winged horse, in the picture of the sky that is there. I wish he would come down, and take me on his back, and let me ride him up to the moon! But, if I so much as stir to look at him, he flies far away out of sight."

And Bellerophon put his faith in the child, who had seen the image of Pegasus in the water, and in the maiden, who had heard him neigh so melodiously, rather than in the middle-aged clown, who believed only in cart-horses, or in the old man who had forgotten the beautiful things of his youth.

Therefore, he haunted about the Fountain of Pirene for a great many days afterward. He kept continually on the watch, looking upward at the sky, or else down into the water, hoping forever that he should see either the reflected image of the winged horse, or the marvellous reality. He held the bridle, with its bright gems and golden bit, always ready in his hand. The rustic people, who dwelt in the neighborhood, and drove their cattle to the fountain to drink, would often laugh at poor

bulrushes, which was intended to represent Bellerophon's ornamental bridle. But the gentle child, who had seen the picture of Pegasus in the water, comforted the young stranger more than all the naughty boys could torment him. The dear little fellow, in his play-hours, often sat down beside him, and, without speaking a word, would look down into the fountain and up toward the sky, with so innocent a faith, that Bellerophon could not help feeling encouraged.

Now you will, perhaps, wish to be told why it was that Bellerophon had undertaken to catch the winged horse. And we shall find no better opportunity to speak about this matter than while he is waiting for Pegasus to appear.

If I were to relate the whole of Bellerophon's previous adventures, they might easily grow into a very long story. It will be quite enough to say, that, in a certain country of Asia, a terrible monster, called a Chimæra, had made its appearance, and was doing more mischief than could be talked about between now and sunset. According to the best accounts which I have been able to obtain, this Chimæra was nearly, if not quite, the ugliest and most poisonous creature, and the strangest and unaccountablest, and the hardest to fight with, and the most difficult to run away from, that ever came out of the earth's inside. It had a tail like a boa-constrictor; its body was like I do not care what; and it had three separate heads, one of which was a lion's, the second a goat's, and the third an abominably great snake's. And a hot blast of fire came flaming out of each of

ts three mouths! Being an earthly monster, I doubt whether it had any wings; but, wings or no, it ran like a goat and a lion, and wriggled along like a serpent, and thus contrived to make about as much speed as all the three together.

Oh, the mischief, and mischief, and mischief that this naughty creature did! With its flaming breath, it could set a forest on fire, or burn up a field of grain, or, for that matter, a village, with all its fences and houses. It laid waste the whole country round about, and used to eat up people and animals alive, and cook them afterward in the burning oven of its stomach. Mercy on us, little children, I hope neither you nor I will ever happen to meet a Chimæra!

else was afraid of, and which, unless it should be soon killed, was likely to convert Lycia into a desert. Bellerophon hesitated not a moment, but assured the king that he would either slay this dreaded Chimæra, or perish in the attempt.

But, in the first place, as the monster was so prodigiously swift, he bethought himself that he should never win the victory by fighting on foot. The wisest thing he could do, therefore, was to get the very best and fleetest horse that could anywhere be found. And what other horse, in all the world, was half so fleet as the marvellous horse Pegasus, who had wings as well as legs, and was even more active in the air than on the earth? To be sure, a great many people denied that there was any such horse with wings, and said that the stories about him were all poetry and nonsense. But, wonderful as it appeared, Bellerophon believed that Pegasus was a real steed, and hoped that he himself might be fortunate enough to find him; and, once fairly mounted on his back, he would be able to fight the Chimæra at better advantage.

And this was the purpose with which he had travelled from Lycia to Greece, and had brought the beautifully ornamented bridle in his hand. It was an enchanted bridle. If he could only succeed in putting the golden bit into the mouth of Pegasus, the winged horse would be submissive, and would own Bellerophon for his master, and fly whithersoever he might choose to turn the rein.

But, indeed, it was a weary and anxious time, while

Bellerophon waited and waited for Pegasus, in hopes that he would come and drink at the Fountain of Pirene. He was afraid lest King Iobates should imagine that he had fled from the Chimæra. It pained him, too, to think how much mischief the monster was doing, while he himself, instead of fighting with it, was compelled to sit idly poring over the bright waters of Pirene, as they gushed out of the sparkling sand. And as Pegasus came thither so seldom in these latter years, and scarcely alighted there more than once in a lifetime, Bellerophon feared that he might grow an old man, and have no strength left in his arms nor courage in his heart, before the winged horse would appear. Oh, how heavily passes the time, while an adventurous youth is yearning to do his part in life,

the winged horse. And in that case poor Bellerophon would at least have been terribly scorched by the creature's breath, and would most probably have been killed and devoured. Nobody should ever try to fight an earth-born Chimæra, unless he can first get upon the back of an aërial steed.

One morning the child spoke to Bellerophon even more hopefully than usual.

"Dear, dear Bellerophon," cried he, "I know not why it is, but I feel as if we should certainly see Pegasus to-day!"

And all that day he would not stir a step from Bellerophon's side; so they ate a crust of bread together, and drank some of the water of the fountain. In the afternoon, there they sat, and Bellerophon had thrown his arm around the child, who likewise had put one of his little hands into Bellerophon's. The latter was lost in his own thoughts, and was fixing his eyes vacantly on the trunks of the trees that overshadowed the fountain, and on the grapevines that clambered up among their branches. But the gentle child was gazing down into the water; he was grieved, for Bellerophon's sake, that the hope of another day should be deceived, like so many before it; and two or three quiet teardrops fell from his eyes, and mingled with what were said to be the many tears of Pirene, when she wept for her slain children.

But, when he least thought of it, Bellerophon felt the pressure of the child's little hand, and heard a soft, almost breathless, whisper.

"See there, dear Bellerophon! There is an image n the water!"

The young man looked down into the dimpling irror of the fountain, and saw what he took to be the eflection of a bird which seemed to be flying at a great eight in the air, with a gleam of sunshine on its snowy r silvery wings.

"What a splendid bird it must be!" said he. "And ow very large it looks, though it must really be flying igher than the clouds!"

"It makes me tremble!" whispered the child. "I m afraid to look up into the air! It is very beautiful, nd yet I dare only look at its image in the water. Dear Bellerophon, do you not see that it is no bird? It

had expected him so long, he was coming to quench his thirst with the water of Pirene.

Nearer and nearer came the aërial wonder, flying in great circles, as you may have seen a dove when about to alight. Downward came Pegasus, in those wide, sweeping circles, which grew narrower, and narrower still, as he gradually approached the earth. The nigher the view of him, the more beautiful he was, and the more marvellous the sweep of his silvery wings. At last, with so light a pressure as hardly to bend the grass about the fountain, or imprint a hoof-tramp in the sand of its margin, he alighted, and, stooping his wild head, began to drink. He drew in the water, with long and pleasant sighs, and tranquil pauses of enjoyment; and then another draught, and another, and another. For, nowhere in the world, or up among the clouds, did Pegasus love any water as he loved this of Pirene. And when his thirst was slaked, he cropped a few of the honey-blossoms of the clover, delicately tasting them, but not caring to make a hearty meal, because the herbage, just beneath the clouds, on the lofty sides of Mount Helicon, suited his palate better than this ordinary grass.

After thus drinking to his heart's content, and in his dainty fashion, condescending to take a little food, the winged horse began to caper to and fro, and dance as it were, out of mere idleness and sport. There never was a more playful creature made than this very Pegasus. So there he frisked, in a way that it delights me to think about, fluttering his great wings as lightly as ever did a

nnet, and running little races, half on earth and half in ir, and which I know not whether to call a flight or a allop. When a creature is perfectly able to fly, he ometimes chooses to run, just for the pastime of the ning; and so did Pegasus, although it cost him some ttle trouble to keep his hoofs so near the ground. ellerophon, meanwhile, holding the child's hand, peeped orth from the shrubbery, and thought that never was ny sight so beautiful as this, nor ever a horse's eyes so ild and spirited as those of Pegasus. It seemed a sin o think of bridling him and riding on his back.

Once or twice, Pegasus stopped, and snuffed the air, ricking up his ears, tossing his head, and turning it on ll sides, as if he partly suspected some mischief or other.

slightest stir or murmur should send him up, with the speed of an arrow-flight, into the furthest blue of the sky.

Finally, when he had had enough of rolling over and over, Pegasus turned himself about, and, indolently, like any other horse, put out his fore legs, in order to rise from the ground; and Bellerophon, who had guessed that he would do so, darted suddenly from the thicket, and leaped astride of his back.

Yes, there he sat, on the back of the winged horse!

But what a bound did Pegasus make, when, for the first time, he felt the weight of a mortal man upon his loins! A bound, indeed! Before he had time to draw a breath, Bellerophon found himself five hundred feet aloft, and still shooting upward, while the winged horse snorted and trembled with terror and anger. Upward he went, up, up, up, until he plunged into the cold misty bosom of a cloud, at which, only a little while before, Bellerophon had been gazing, and fancying it a very pleasant spot. Then again, out of the heart of the cloud, Pegasus shot down like a thunderbolt, as if he meant to dash both himself and his rider headlong against a rock. Then he went through about a thousand of the wildest caprioles that had ever been performed either by a bird or a horse.

I cannot tell you half that he did. He skimmed straight forward, and sidewise, and backward. He reared himself erect, with his fore legs on a wreath of mist, and his hind legs on nothing at all. He flung out his heels behind, and put down his head between his legs, with his

wings pointing right upward. At about two miles' height above the earth, he turned a somerset, so that Bellerophon's heels were where his head should have been, and he seemed to look down into the sky, instead of up. He twisted his head about, and, looking Bellerophon in the face, with fire flashing from his eyes, made a terrible attempt to bite him. He fluttered his pinions so wildly that one of the silver feathers was shaken out, and floating earthward, was picked up by the child, who kept it as long as he lived, in memory of Pegasus and Bellerophon.

But the latter (who, as you may judge, was as good a horseman as ever galloped) had been watching his opportunity, and at last clapped the golden bit of the enchanted bridle between the winged steed's jaws. No sooner was

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While Pegasus had been doing his utmost to shake Bellerophon off his back, he had flown a very long distance; and they had come within sight of a lofty mountain by the time the bit was in his mouth. Bellerophon had seen this mountain before, and knew it to be Helicon, on the summit of which was the winged horse's abode. Thither (after looking gently into his rider's face, as if to ask leave) Pegasus now flew, and, alighting, waited patiently until Bellerophon should please to dismount. The young man, accordingly, leaped from his steed's back, but still held him fast by the bridle. Meeting his eyes, however, he was so affected by the gentleness of his aspect, and by the thought of the free life which Pegasus had heretofore lived, that he could not bear to keep him a prisoner, if he really desired his liberty.

Obeying this generous impulse he slipped the enchanted bridle off the head of Pegasus, and took the bit from his mouth.

"Leave me, Pegasus!" said he. "Either leave me, or love me."

In an instant, the winged horse shot almost out of sight, soaring straight upward from the summit of Mount Helicon. Being long after sunset, it was now twilight on the mountain-top, and dusky evening over all the country round about. But Pegasus flew so high that he overtook the departed day, and was bathed in the upper radiance of the sun. Ascending higher and higher, he looked a bright speck, and, at last, could no longer be seen in the hollow waste of the sky. And Bellerophon

was afraid that he should never behold him more. But, while he was lamenting his own folly, the bright speck reappeared, and drew nearer and nearer, until it descended lower than the sunshine; and, behold; Pegasus had come back! After this trial there was no more fear of the winged horse's making his escape. He and Bellerophon were friends, and put loving faith in one another.

That night they lay down and slept together, with Bellerophon's arm about the neck of Pegasus, not as a caution, but for kindness. And they awoke at peep of day, and bade one another good morning, each in his own language.

In this manner, Bellerophon and the wondrous steed spent several days, and grew better acquainted and fonder

horsemanship in the air, and could manage Pegasus with the least motion of his hand, and had taught him to obey his voice, he determined to attempt the performance of this perilous adventure.

At daybreak, therefore, as soon as he unclosed his eyes, he gently pinched the winged horse's ear, in order to arouse him. Pegasus immediately started from the ground, and pranced about a quarter of a mile aloft, and made a grand sweep around the mountain-top, by way of showing that he was wide awake, and ready for any kind of an excursion. During the whole of this little flight, he uttered a loud, brisk, and melodious neigh, and finally came down at Bellerophon's side, as lightly as ever you saw a sparrow hop upon a twig.

"Well done, dear Pegasus! well done, my sky-skimmer!" cried Bellerophon, fondly stroking the horse's neck. "And now, my fleet and beautiful friend, we must break our fast. To-day we are to fight the terrible Chimæra."

As soon as they had eaten their morning meal, and drank some sparkling water from a spring called Hippocrene, Pegasus held out his head, of his own accord, so that his master might put on the bridle. Then with a great many playful leaps and airy caperings, he showed his impatience to be gone; while Bellerophon was girding on his sword, and hanging his shield about his neck, and preparing himself for battle. When everything was ready, the rider mounted, and (as was his custom, when going a long distance) ascended five miles

perpendicularly, so as the better to see whither he was directing his course. He then turned the head of Pegasus toward the east, and set out for Lycia. In their flight they overtook an eagle, and came so nigh him, before he could get out of their way, that Bellerophon might easily have caught him by the leg. Hastening onward at this rate, it was still early in the forenoon when they beheld the lofty mountains of Lycia, with their deep and shaggy valleys. If Bellerophon had been told truly, it was in one of those dismal valleys that the hideous Chimæra had taken up its abode.

Being now so near their journey's end, the winged horse gradually descended with his rider; and they took

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As I have already said, there was nothing remarkable to be detected, at first sight, in any of the valleys and dells that lay among the precipitous heights of the mountains. Nothing at all; unless, indeed, it were three spires of black smoke, which issued from what seemed to be the mouth of a cavern, and clambered sullenly into the atmosphere. Before reaching the mountain-top, these three black smoke-wreaths mingled themselves into one. The cavern was almost directly beneath the winged horse and his rider, at the distance of about a thousand feet. The smoke, as it crept heavily upward, had an ugly, sulphurous, stifling scent, which caused Pegasus to snort and Bellerophon to sneeze. So disagreeable was it to the marvellous steed (who was accustomed to breathe only the purest air), that he waved his wings, and shot half a mile out of the range of this offensive vapor.

But, on looking behind him, Bellerophon saw something that induced him first to draw the bridle, and then to turn Pegasus about. He made a sign, which the winged horse understood, and sunk slowly through the air, until his hoofs were scarcely more than a man's height above the rocky bottom of the valley. In front, as far off as you could throw a stone, was the cavern's mouth, with the three smoke-wreaths oozing out of it. And what else did Bellerophon behold there?

There seemed to be a heap of strange and terrible creatures curled up within the cavern. Their bodies lay so close together, that Bellerophon could not distinguish

them apart; but, judging by their heads, one of these creatures was a huge snake, the second a fierce lion, and the third an ugly goat. The lion and the goat were asleep; the snake was broad awake, and kept staring around him with a great pair of fiery eyes. But—and this was the most wonderful part of the matter—the three spires of smoke evidently issued from the nostrils of these three heads! So strange was the spectacle, that, though Bellerophon had been all along expecting it, the truth did not immediately occur to him, that here was the terrible three-headed Chimæra. He had found out the Chimæra's cavern. The snake, the lion, and the goat, as he supposed them to be, were not three separate creatures, but one monster!

ing itself venomously behind. If Pegasus had not been as nimble as a bird, both he and his rider would have been overthrown by the Chimæra's headlong rush, and thus the battle have been ended before it was well begun. But the winged horse was not to be caught so. In the twinkling of an eye he was up and aloft, half-way to the clouds, snorting with anger. He shuddered, too, not with affright, but with utter disgust at the loathsomeness of this poisonous thing with three heads.

The Chimæra, on the other hand, raised itself up so as to stand absolutely on the tip-end of its tail, with its talons pawing fiercely in the air, and its three heads spluttering fire at Pegasus and his rider. My stars, how it roared, and hissed, and bellowed! Bellerophon, meanwhile, was fitting his shield on his arm, and drawing his sword.

"Now, my beloved Pegasus," he whispered in the winged horse's ear, "thou must help me to slay this insufferable monster; or else thou shalt fly back to thy solitary mountain-peak without thy friend Bellerophon. For either the Chimæra dies, or its three mouths shall gnaw this head of mine, which has slumbered upon thy neck!"

Pegasus whinnied, and, turning back his head, rubbed his nose tenderly against his rider's cheek. It was his way of telling him that, though he had wings and was an immortal horse, yet he would perish, if it were possible for immortality to perish, rather than leave Bellerophon behind.

"I thank you, Pegasus," answered Bellerophon. "Now, then, let us make a dash at the monster!"

Uttering these words, he shook the bridle; and Pegasus darted down aslant, as swift as the flight of an arrow, right toward the Chimæra's threefold head, which, all this time, was poking itself as high as it could into the air. As he came within arm's-length, Bellerophon made a cut at the monster, but was carried onward by his steed, before he could see whether the blow had been successful. Pegasus continued his course, but soon wheeled round, at about the same distance from the Chimæra as before. Bellerophon then perceived that he had cut the goat's head of the monster almost off, so that it dangled downward by the skin, and seemed quite dead.

flying steed with the other. On his part, Bellerophon had mortally wounded the lion's head of the monster, insomuch that it now hung downward, with its fire almost extinguished, and sending out gasps of thick black smoke. The snake's head, however (which was the only one now left), was twice as fierce and venomous as ever before. It belched forth shoots of fire five hundred yards long, and emitted hisses so loud, so harsh, and so ear-piercing, that King Iobates heard them, fifty miles off, and trembled till the throne shook under him.

"Well-a-day!" thought the poor king; "the Chimæra is certainly coming to devour me!"

Meanwhile Pegasus had again paused in the air, and neighed angrily, while sparkles of a pure crystal flame darted out of his eyes. How unlike the lurid fire of the Chimæra! The aërial steed's spirit was all aroused, and so was that of Bellerophon.

"Dost thou bleed, my immortal horse?" cried the young man, caring less for his own hurt than for the anguish of this glorious creature, that ought never to have tasted pain. "The execrable Chimæra shall pay for this mischief with his last head!"

Then he shook the bridle, shouted loudly, and guided Pegasus, not aslantwise as before, but straight at the monster's hideous front. So rapid was the onset, that it seemed but a dazzle and a flash before Bellerophon was at close gripes with his enemy.

The Chimæra, by this time, after losing its second head, had got into a red-hot passion of pain and ram-

pant rage. It so flounced about, half on earth and partly in the air, that it was impossible to say which element it rested upon. It opened its snake-jaws to such an abominable width, that Pegasus might almost, I was going to say, have flown right down its throat, wings outspread, rider and all! At their approach it shot out a tremendous blast of its fiery breath, and enveloped Bellerophon and his steed in a perfect atmosphere of flame, singeing the wings of Pegasus, scorching off one whole side of the young man's golden ringlets, and making them both far hotter than was comfortable, from head to foot.

But this was nothing to what followed.

When the airy rush of the winged horse had brought

But the Chimæra was so mad and wild with pain, that it did not guard itself so well as might else have been the case. Perhaps, after all, the best way to fight a Chimæra is by getting as close to it as you can. In its efforts to stick its horrible iron claws into its enemy, the creature left its own breast quite exposed; and perceiving this, Bellerophon thrust his sword up to the hilt into its cruel heart. Immediately the snaky tail untied its knot. The monster let go its hold of Pegasus, and fell from that vast height downward; while the fire within its bosom, instead of being put out, burned fiercer than ever, and quickly began to consume the dead carcass. Thus it fell out of the sky, all aflame, and (it being nightfall before it reached the earth) was mistaken for as hooting star or a comet. But, at early sunrise, some cottagers were going to their day's labor, and saw, to their astonishment, that several acres of ground were strewn with black ashes. In the middle of a field, there was a heap of whitened bones, a great deal higher than a haystack. Nothing else was ever seen of the dreadful Chimæra!

And when Bellerophon had won the victory, he bent forward and kissed Pegasus, while the tears stood in his eyes.

"Back now, my beloved steed!" said he. "Back to the Fountain of Pirene!"

Pegasus skimmed through the air, quicker than ever he did before, and reached the fountain in a very short time. And there he found the old man leaning on his

staff, and the country fellow watering his cow, and the pretty maiden filling her pitcher.

"I remember now," quoth the old man, "I saw this winged horse once before, when I was quite a lad. But he was ten times handsomer in those days."

"I own a cart-horse, worth three of him!" said the country fellow. "If this pony were mine, the first thing I should do would be to clip his wings!"

But the poor maiden said nothing, for she had always the luck to be afraid at the wrong time. So she ran away, and let her pitcher tumble down, and broke it.

"Where is the gentle child," asked Bellerophon, "who used to keep me company, and never lost his faith,

me, I should never have waited for Pegasus, and never have gone up above the clouds, and never have conquered the terrible Chimæra. Thou, my beloved little friend, hast done it all. And now let us give Pegasus his liberty."

So he slipped off the enchanted bridle from the head of the marvellous steed.

"Be free, for evermore, my Pegasus!" cried he, with a shade of sadness in his tone. "Be as free as thou art fleet!"

But Pegasus rested his head on Bellerophon's shoulder, and would not be persuaded to take flight.

"Well then," said Bellerophon, caressing the airy horse, "thou shalt be with me, as long as thou wilt; and we will go together, forthwith, and tell King Iobates that the Chimæra is destroyed."

Then Bellerophon embraced the gentle child, and promised to come to him again, and departed. But, in after years, that child took higher flights upon the aërial steed than ever did Bellerophon, and achieved more honorable deeds than his friend's victory over the Chimæra. For, gentle and tender as he was, he grew to be a mighty poet!

THE DRAGON'S TEETH

By NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

CADMUS, Phœnix, and Cilix, the three sons of King Agenor, and their little sister Europa (who was a very beautiful child) were at play together, near the sea-shore, in their father's kingdom of Phœnicia. They had rambled to some distance from the palace where their parents dwelled, and were now in a verdant meadow, on one side of which lay the sea, all sparkling and dimpling in the sunshine, and murmuring gently against the beach.

at all, could not have slept more than a moment, when she heard something trample on the grass, not far from her, and peeping out from the heap of flowers, beheld a snow-white bull.

And whence could this bull have come? Europa and her brothers had been a long time playing in the meadow, and had seen no cattle, nor other living thing, either there or on the neighboring hills.

"Brother Cadmus!" cried Europa, starting up out of the midst of the roses and lilies. "Phœnix! Cilix! Where are you all? Help! Help! Come and drive away this bull!"

But her brothers were too far off to hear; especially as the fright took away Europa's voice, and hindered her from calling very loudly. So there she stood, with her pretty mouth wide open, as pale as the white lilies that were twisted among the other flowers in her garlands.

Nevertheless, it was the suddenness with which she had perceived the bull, rather than anything frightful in his appearance, that caused Europa so much alarm. On looking at him more attentively, she began to see that he was a beautiful animal, and even fancied a particularly amiable expression in his face. As for his breath—the breath of cattle, you know, is always sweet—it was as fragrant as if he had been grazing on no other food than rosebuds, or, at least, the most delicate of clover-blossoms. Never before did a bull have such bright and tender eyes, and such smooth horns of ivory, as this one. And the bull ran little races, and capered sportively

around the child; so that she quite forgot how big and strong he was, and, from the gentleness and playfulness of his actions, soon came to consider him as innocent a creature as a pet lamb.

Thus, frightened as she at first was, you might by and by have seen Europa stroking the bull's forehead with her small white hand, and taking the garlands off her own head to hang them on his neck and ivory horns. Then she pulled up some blades of grass, and he ate them out of her hand, not as if he were hungry, but because he wanted to be friends with the child, and took pleasure in eating what she had touched. Well, my stars! was there ever such a gentle, sweet, pretty, and amiable creature as this bull, and ever such a nice play-

"Come back, pretty creature!" she cried. "Here is a nice clover blossom."

And then it was delightful to witness the gratitude of this amiable bull, and how he was so full of joy and thankfulness that he capered higher than ever. He came running, and bowed his head before Europa, as if he knew her to be a king's daughter, or else recognized the important truth that a little girl is everybody's queen. And not only did the bull bend his neck, he absolutely kneeled down at her feet, and made such intelligent nods, and other inviting gestures, that Europa understood what he meant just as well as if he had put it in so many words.

"Come, dear child," was what he wanted to say, "let me give you a ride on my back."

At the first thought of such a thing, Europa drew back. But then she considered in her wise little head that there could be no possible harm in taking just one gallop on the back of this docile and friendly animal, who would certainly set her down the very instant she desired it. And how it would surprise her brothers to see her riding across the green meadow! And what merry times they might have, either taking turns for a gallop, or clambering on the gentle creature, all four children together, and careering round the field with shouts of laughter that would be heard as far off as King Agenor's palace!

"I think I will do it," said the child to herself.

And, indeed, why not? She cast a glance around,

and caught a glimpse of Cadmus, Phœnix, and Cilix, who were still in pursuit of the butterfly, almost at the other end of the meadow. It would be the quickest way of rejoining them, to get upon the white bull's back. She came a step nearer to him, therefore; and—sociable creature that he was—he showed so much joy at this mark of her confidence, that the child could not find it in her heart to hesitate any longer. Making one bound (for this little princess was as active as a squirrel), there sat Europa on the beautiful bull, holding an ivory horn in each hand, lest she should fall off.

"Softly, pretty bull, softly!" she said, rather frightened at what she had done. "Do not gallop too fast."

Having got the child on his back, the animal gave a

waved her hand, and said, "Good-by," playfully pretending that she was now bound on a distant journey, and might not see her brothers again for nobody could tell how long.

"Good-by," shouted Cadmus, Phœnix, and Cilix, all in one breath.

But, together with her enjoyment of the sport, there was still a little remnant of fear in the child's heart; so that her last look at the three boys was a troubled one, and made them feel as if their dear sister were really leaving them forever. And what do you think the snowy bull did next? Why, he set off, as swift as the wind, straight down to the sea-shore, scampered across the sand, took an airy leap, and plunged right in among the foaming billows. The white spray rose in a shower over him and little Europa, and fell spattering down upon the water.

Then what a scream of terror did the poor child send forth! The three brothers screamed manfully, likewise, and ran to the shore as fast as their legs would carry them, with Cadmus at their head. But it was too late. When they reached the margin of the sand, the treacherous animal was already far away in the wide blue sea, with only his snowy head and tail emerging, and poor little Europa between them, stretching out one hand toward her dear brothers, while she grasped the bull's ivory horn with the other. And there stood Cadmus, Phœnix, and Cilix, gazing at this sad spectacle, through their tears, until they could no longer distinguish the bull's snowy

head from the white-capped billows that seemed to boil up out of the sea's depths around him. Nothing more was ever seen of the white bull—nothing more of the beautiful child.

This was a mournful story, as you may well think, for the three boys to carry home their parents. King Agenor, their father, was the ruler of the whole country; but he loved his little daughter Europa better than his kingdom, or than all his other children, or than anything else in the world. Therefore, when Cadmus and his two brothers came crying home, and told him how that a white bull had carried off their sister, and swam with her over the sea, the king was quite beside himself with grief and rage. Although it was now twilight, and fast growing

"Oh no, mother!" cried the boys. "The night is dark, and there is no knowing what troubles and perils we may meet with."

"Alas! my dear children," answered poor Queen Telephassa, weeping bitterly, "that is only another reason why I should go with you. If I should lose you, too, as well as my little Europa, what would become of me?"

"And let me go likewise!" said their playfellow Thasus, who came running to join them.

Thasus was the son of a seafaring person in the neighborhood; he had been brought up with the young princes, and was their intimate friend, and loved Europa very much; so they consented that he should accompany them. The whole party, therefore, set forth together; Cadmus, Phœnix, Cilix, and Thasus clustered round Queen Telephassa, grasping her skirts, and begging her to lean upon their shoulders whenever she felt weary. In this manner they went down the palace steps, and began a journey which turned out to be a great deal longer than they dreamed of. The last that they saw of King Agenor, he came to the door, with a servant holding a torch beside him, and called after them into the gathering darkness:

"Remember! Never ascend these steps again without the child!"

"Never!" sobbed Queen Telephassa; and the three brothers and Thasus answered, "Never! Never! Never! Never!"

And they kept their word. Year after year King Agenor sat in the solitude of his beautiful palace, listening in vain for their returning footsteps, hoping to hear the familiar voice of the queen, and the cheerful talk of his sons and their playfellow Thasus, entering the door together, and the sweet, childish accents of little Europa in the midst of them. But so long a time went by, that, at last, if they had really come, the king would not have known that this was the voice of Telephassa, and these the younger voices that used to make such joyful echoes when the children were playing about the palace. We must now leave King Agenor to sit on his throne, and must go along with Queen Telephassa and her four youthful companions.

The Dragon's Teeth

I cannot tell you how long Queen Telephassa, and Cadmus, Phœnix, and Cilix, her three sons, and Thasus, their playfellow, went wandering along the highways and bypaths, or through the pathless wildernesses of the earth, in this manner. But certain it is, that, before they reached any place of rest, their splendid garments were quite worn out. They all looked very much travel-stained, and would have had the dust of many countries on their shoes, if the streams, through which they waded, had not washed it all away. When they had been gone a year, Telephassa threw away her crown, because it chafed her forehead.

"It has given me many a headache," said the poor queen, "and it cannot cure my heartache."

As fast as their princely robes got torn and tattered, they exchanged them for such mean attire as ordinary people wore. By and by they came to have a wild and homeless aspect; so that you would much sooner have taken them for a gypsy family than a queen and three princes, and a young nobleman, who had once a palace for their home, and a train of servants to do their bidding. The four boys grew up to be tall young men, with sunburned faces. Each of them girded on a sword, to defend themselves against the perils of the way. When the husbandmen, at whose farmhouses they sought hospitality, needed their assistance in the harvest-field, they gave it willingly; and Queen Telephassa (who had done no work in her palace, save to braid silk threads with golden ones) came behind them to bind the sheaves. If pay-

ment was offered, they shook their heads, and only asked for tidings of Europa.

"There are bulls enough in my pasture," the old farmers would reply; "but I never heard of one like this you tell me of. A snow-white bull with a little princess on his back! Ho! ho! I ask your pardon, good folks; but there never was such a sight seen hereabouts."

At last, when his upper lip began to have the down on it, Phœnix grew weary of rambling hither and thither to no purpose. So, one day, when they happened to be passing through a pleasant and solitary tract of country, he sat himself down on a heap of moss.

"I can go no further," said Phœnix. "It is a mere

But, before setting out, they all helped Phœnix to build a habitation. When completed, it was a sweet rural bower, roofed overhead with an arch of living boughs. Inside there were two pleasant rooms, one of which had a soft heap of moss for a bed, while the other was furnished with a rustic seat or two, curiously fashioned out of the crooked roots of trees. So comfortable and homelike did it seem, that Telephassa and her three companions could not help sighing, to think that they must still roam about the world, instead of spending the remainder of their lives in some such cheerful abode as they had here built for Phœnix. But, when they bade him farewell, Phœnix shed tears, and probably regretted that he was no longer to keep them company.

However, he had fixed upon an admirable place to dwell in. And by and by there came other people, who chanced to have no homes; and, seeing how pleasant a spot it was, they built themselves huts in the neighborhood of Phœnix's habitation. Thus, before many years went by, a city had grown up there, in the centre of which was seen a stately palace of marble, wherein dwelled Phœnix, clothed in a purple robe, and wearing a golden crown upon his head. For the inhabitants of the new city, finding that he had royal blood in his veins, had chosen him to be their king. The very first decree of state which King Phœnix issued was, that if a maiden happened to arrive in the kingdom, mounted on a snow-white bull, and calling herself Europa, his subjects should treat her with the greatest kindness and respect, and

immediately bring her to the palace. You may see, by this, that Phœnix's conscience never quite ceased to trouble him, for giving up the quest of his dear sister, and sitting himself down to be comfortable, while his mother and her companions went onward.

But often and often, at the close of a weary day's journey, did Telephassa and Cadmus, Cilix and Thasus, remember the pleasant spot in which they had left Phœnix. It was a sorrowful prospect for these wanderers, that on the morrow they must again set forth, and that, after many nightfalls, they would perhaps be no nearer the close of their toilsome pilgrimage than now. These thoughts made them all melancholy at times, but appeared to torment Cilix more than the rest of the party.

to take up my abode here; and I entreat you, mother, brother, and friend, to follow my example."

"Not I, for one," said Telephassa; although the poor queen, firmly as she spoke, was so travel-worn that she could hardly put her foot to the ground—"not I, for one! In the depths of my heart, little Europa is still the rosy child who ran to gather flowers so many years ago. She has not grown to womanhood, nor forgotten me. At noon, at night, journeying onward, sitting down to rest, her childish voice is always in my ears, calling, 'Mother! mother!' Stop here who may, there is no repose for me."

"Nor for me," said Cadmus, "while my dear mother pleases to go onward."

And the faithful Thasus, too, was resolved to bear them company. They remained with Cilix a few days, however, and helped him to build a rustic bower, resembling the one which they had formerly built for Phœnix.

When they were bidding him farewell, Cilix burst into tears, and told his mother that it seemed just as melancholy a dream to stay there, in solitude, as to go onward. If she really believed that they would ever find Europa, he was willing to continue the search with them, even now. But Telephassa bade him remain there, and be happy, if his own heart would let him. So the pilgrims took their leave of him, and departed, and were hardly out of sight before some other wandering people came along that way, and saw Cilix's habitation, and were greatly delighted with the appearance of the place. There

being abundance of unoccupied ground in the neighborhood, these strangers built huts for themselves, and were soon joined by a multitude of new settlers, who quickly formed a city. In the middle of it was seen a magnificent palace of colored marble, on the balcony of which, every noontide, appeared Cilix, in a long purple robe, and with a jewelled crown upon his head; for the inhabitants, when they found out that he was a king's son, had considered him the fittest of all men to be a king himself.

One of the first acts of King Cilix's government was to send out an expedition, consisting of a grave ambassador and an escort of bold and hardy young men, with orders to visit the principal kingdoms of the earth, and inquire whether a young maiden had passed through those

of these true-hearted three ever dreamed of giving up the search.

One morning, however, poor Thasus found that he had sprained his ankle, and could not possibly go a step further.

"After a few days, to be sure," said he, mournfully, "I might make shift to hobble along with a stick. But that would only delay you, and perhaps hinder you from finding dear little Europa, after all your pains and trouble. Do you go forward, therefore, my beloved companions, and leave me to follow as I may."

"Thou hast been a true friend, dear Thasus," said Queen Telephassa, kissing his forehead. "Being neither my son, nor the brother of our lost Europa, thou hast shown thyself truer to me and her than Phœnix and Cilix did, whom we have left behind us. Without thy loving help, and that of my son Cadmus, my limbs could not have borne me half so far as this. Now, take thy rest, and be at peace. For—and it is the first time I have owned it to myself—I begin to question whether we shall ever find my beloved daughter in this world."

Saying this, the poor queen shed tears, because it was a grievous trial to the mother's heart to confess that her hopes were growing faint. From that day forward, Cadmus noticed that she never travelled with the same alacrity of spirit that had heretofore supported her. Her weight was heavier upon his arm.

Before setting out, Cadmus helped Thasus build a bower; while Telephassa, being too infirm to give any

great assistance, advised them how to fit it up and furnish it, so that it might be as comfortable as a hut of branches could. Thasus, however, did not spend all his days in this green bower. For it happened to him, as to Phœnix and Cilix, that other homeless people visited the spot and liked it, and built themselves habitations in the neighborhood. So here, in the course of a few years, was another thriving city with a red freestone palace in the centre of it, where Thasus sat upon a throne, doing justice to the people, with a purple robe over his shoulders, a sceptre in his hand, and a crown upon his head. The inhabitants had made him king, not for the sake of any royal blood (for none was in his veins), but because Thasus was an upright, true-hearted, and coura-

ment. And though Europa never came, the good Thasus had the blessings of many a poor traveller, who profited by the food and lodging which were meant for the little playmate of the king's boyhood.

Telephassa and Cadmus were now pursuing their weary way, with no companion but each other. The queen leaned heavily upon her son's arm, and could walk only a few miles a day. But for all her weakness and weariness, she would not be persuaded to give up the search. It was enough to bring tears into the eyes of bearded men to hear the melancholy tone with which she inquired of every stranger whether he could tell her any news of the lost child.

"Have you seen a little girl—no, no, I mean a young maiden of full growth—passing by this way, mounted on a snow-white bull, which gallops as swiftly as the wind?"

"We have seen no such wondrous sight," the people would reply; and very often, taking Cadmus aside, they whispered to him, "Is this stately and sad-looking woman your mother? Surely she is not in her right mind; and you ought to take her home, and make her comfortable, and do your best to get this dream out of her fancy."

"It is no dream," said Cadmus. "Everything else is a dream, save that."

But, one day, Telephassa seemed feebler than usual, and leaned almost her whole weight on the arm of Cadmus, and walked more slowly than ever before. At last they reached a solitary spot, where she told her son that she must needs lie down, and take a good, long rest.

"A good, long rest!" she repeated, looking Cadmus tenderly in the face—"a good, long rest, thou dearest one!"

"As long as you please, dear mother," answered Cadmus.

Telephassa bade him sit down on the turf beside her, and then she took his hand.

"My son," said she, fixing her dim eyes most lovingly upon him, "this rest that I speak of will be very long indeed! You must not wait till it is finished. Dear Cadmus, you do not comprehend me. You must make a grave here, and lay your mother's weary frame into it. My pilgrimage is over."

Cadmus burst into tears, and, for a long time, refused

then go, my son, to Delphi, and inquire of the oracle what thou shalt do next."

"O, mother, mother," cried Cadmus, "couldst thou but have seen my sister before this hour!"

"It matters little now," answered Telephassa, and there was a smile upon her face. "I go now to the better world, and, sooner or later, shall find my daughter there."

I will not sadden you, my little hearers, with telling how Telephassa died and was buried, but will only say, that her dying smile grew brighter, instead of vanishing from her dead face; so that Cadmus felt convinced that, at her very first step into the better world, she had caught Europa in her arms. He planted some flowers on his mother's grave, and left them to grow there, and make the place beautiful, when he should be far away.

After performing this last sorrowful duty, he set forth alone, and took the road toward the famous oracle of Delphi, as Telephassa had advised him. On his way thither, he still inquired of most people whom he met whether they had seen Europa; for, to say the truth, Cadmus had grown so accustomed to ask the question, that it came to his lips as readily as a remark about the weather. He received various answers. Some told him one thing, and some another. Among the rest, a mariner affirmed, that, many years before, in a distant country, he had heard a rumor about a white bull, which came swimming across the sea with a child on his back, dressed up in flowers that were blighted by the sea-water. He

did not know what had become of the child or the bull; and Cadmus suspected, indeed, by a queer twinkle in the mariner's eyes, that he was putting a joke upon him, and had never really heard anything about the matter.

Poor Cadmus found it more wearisome to travel alone than to bear all his dear mother's weight while she had kept him company. His heart, you will understand, was now so heavy that it seemed impossible, sometimes, to carry it any further. But his limbs were strong and active, and well accustomed to exercise. He walked swiftly along, thinking of King Agenor and Queen Telephassa, and his brothers, and the friendly Thasus, all of whom he had left behind him, at one point of his pilgrimage or another, and never expected to see them any more. Full

tuft of shrubbery, that ran wild over the mysterious hole in the hillside.

When Cadmus had thrust a passage through the tangled boughs, and made his way into the bower, he did not at first discern the half-hidden cavity. But soon he felt a cold stream of air rushing out of it, with so much force that it shook the ringlets on his cheek. Pulling away the shrubbery which clustered over the hole, he bent forward, and spoke in a distinct but reverential tone, as if addressing some unseen personage inside of the mountain.

"Sacred oracle of Delphi," said he, "whither shall I go next in quest of my dear sister Europa?"

There was at first a deep silence, and then a rushing sound, or a noise like a long sigh, proceeding out of the interior of the earth. This cavity, you must know, was looked upon as a sort of fountain of truth, which sometimes gushed out in audible words; although, for the most part, these words were such a riddle that they might just as well have stayed at the bottom of the hole. But Cadmus was more fortunate than many others who went to Delphi in search of truth. By and by, the rushing noise began to sound like articulate language. It repeated, over and over again, the following sentence, which, after all, was so like the vague whistle of a blast of air, that Cadmus really did not quite know whether it meant anything or not:—

"Seek her no more! Seek her no more! Seek her no more!"

"What, then, shall I do?" asked Cadmus.

For ever since he was a child, you know, it had been he great object of his life to find his sister. From the very hour that he left following the butterfly in the meadow, near his father's palace, he had done his best to follow Europa, over land and sea. And now, if he must give up the search, he seemed to have no more business in the world.

But again the sighing gust of air grew into something like a hoarse voice.

"Follow the cow!" it said. "Follow the cow! Follow the cow!"

And when these words had been repeated until Cadmus was tired of hearing them (especially as he could not

what might happen to him, he took the first path that offered itself, and went along at a sluggish pace; for, having no object in view, nor any reason to go one way more than another, it would certainly have been foolish to make haste. Whenever he met anybody, the old question was at his tongue's end:

"Have you seen a beautiful maiden, dressed like a king's daughter, and mounted on a snow-white bull, that gallops as swiftly as the wind?"

But, remembering what the oracle had said, he only half uttered the words, and then mumbled the rest indistinctly; and from his confusion, people must have imagined that this handsome young man had lost his wits.

I knew not how far Cadmus had gone, nor could he himself have told you, when, at no great distance before him, he beheld a brindled cow. She was lying down by the wayside, and quietly chewing her cud; nor did she take any notice of the young man until he had approached pretty nigh. Then, getting leisurely upon her feet, and giving her head a gentle toss, she began to move along at a moderate pace, often pausing just long enough to crop a mouthful of grass. Cadmus loitered behind, whistling idly to himself, and scarcely noticing the cow; until the thought occurred to him, whether this could possibly be the animal which, according to the oracle's response, was to serve him for a guide. But he smiled at himself for fancying such a thing. He could not seriously think that this was the cow, because she went along so quietly, behaving just like any other cow.

Evidently she neither knew nor cared so much as a wisp of hay about Cadmus, and was only thinking how to get her living along the wayside, where the herbage was green and fresh. Perhaps she was going home to be milked.

"Cow, cow, cow!" cried Cadmus. "Hey, Brindle, hey! Stop, my good cow."

He wanted to come up with the cow, so as to examine her, and see if she would appear to know him, or whether there were any peculiarities to distinguish her from a thousand other cows, whose only business is to fill the milk-pail, and sometimes kick it over. But still the brindled cow trudged on, whisking her tail to keep the flies away, and taking as little notice of Cadmus as she well could. If he walked slowly, so did the cow, and seized the opportunity to graze. If he quickened his pace, the cow went just so much the faster; and once, when Cadmus tried to catch her by running, she threw out her heels, stuck her tail straight on end, and set off at a gallop, looking as queerly as cows generally do, while putting themselves to their speed.

When Cadmus saw that it was impossible to come up with her, he walked on moderately, as before. The cow, too, went leisurely on, without looking behind. Wherever the grass was greenest, there she nibbled a mouthful or two. Where a brook glistened brightly across the path, there the cow drank, and breathed a comfortable sigh, and drank again, and trudged onward at the pace that best suited herself and Cadmus.

"I do believe," thought Cadmus, "that this may be

the cow that was foretold me. If it be the one, I suppose she will lie down somewhere hereabout."

Whether it were the oracular cow or some other one, it did not seem reasonable that she should travel a great way further. So, whenever they reached a particularly pleasant spot on a breezy hillside, or in a sheltered vale, or flowery meadow, on the shore of a calm lake, or along the bank of a clear stream, Cadmus looked eagerly around to see if the situation would suit him for a home. But still, whether he liked the place or no, the brindled cow never offered to lie down. On she went at the quiet pace of a cow going homeward to the barnyard; and, every moment, Cadmus expected to see a milkmaid approaching with a pail, or a herdsman running to head the stray animal, and turn her back toward the pasture. But no milkmaid came; no herdsman drove her back; and Cadmus followed the stray Brindle till he was almost ready to drop down with fatigue.

"O brindled cow," cried he, in a tone of despair, "do you never mean to stop?"

He had now grown too intent on following her to think of lagging behind, however long the way, and whatever might be his fatigue. Indeed, it seemed as if there were something about the animal that bewitched people. Several persons who happened to see the brindled cow, and Cadmus following behind, began to trudge after her, precisely as he did. Cadmus was glad of somebody to converse with, and therefore talked very freely to these good people. He told them all his adventures, and

now he had left King Agenor in his palace, and Phœnix
t one place, and Cilix at another, and Thasus at a third,
nd his dear mother, Queen Telephassa, under a flowery
od; so that now he was quite alone, both friendless and
omeless. He mentioned, likewise, that the oracle had
idden him be guided by a cow, and inquired of the
trangers whether they supposed that this brindled ani-
nal could be the one.

"Why, 'tis a very wonderful affair," answered one
f his new companions. "I am pretty well acquainted
vith the ways of cattle, and I nevery knew a cow, of her
wn accord, to go so far without stopping. If my legs
vill let me, I'll never leave following the beast till she
ies down."

But still they kept trudging stoutly forward, and talking as they went. The strangers grew very fond of Cadmus, and resolved never to leave him, but to help him build a city wherever the cow might lie down. In the centre of it there should be a noble palace, in which Cadmus might dwell, and be their king, with a throne, a crown and sceptre, a purple robe, and everything else that a king out to have; for in him there was the royal blood, and the royal heart, and the head that knew how to rule.

While they were talking of these schemes, and beguiling the tediousness of the way with laying out the plan of the new city, one of the company happened to look at the cow.

"Joy! joy!" cried he, clapping his hands. "Brindle is going to lie down."

They all looked; and, sure enough, the cow had stopped, and was staring leisurely about her, as other cows do when on the point of lying down. And slowly, slowly did she recline herself on the soft grass, first bending her fore legs, and then crouching her hind ones. When Cadmus and his companions came up with her, there was the brindled cow taking her ease, chewing her cud, and looking them quietly in the face; as if this was just the spot she had been seeking for, and as if it were all a matter of course.

"This, then," said Cadmus, gazing around him, "this is to be my home."

It was a fertile and lovely plain, with great trees fling-

ing their sun-speckled shadows over it, and hills fencing it in from the rough weather. At no great distance, they beheld a river gleaming in the sunshine. A home feeling stole into the heart of poor Cadmus. He was very glad to know that here he might awake in the morning, without the necessity of putting on his dusty sandals to travel further and further. The days and the years would pass over him, and find him still in this pleasant spot. If he could have had his brothers with him, and his friend Thasus, and could have seen his dear mother under a roof of his own, he might here have been happy, after all their disappointments. Some day or other, too, his sister Europa might have come quietly to the door of his home, and smiled round upon the familiar faces. But, indeed, since there was no hope of regaining the friends of his boyhood, or ever seeing his dear sister again, Cadmus resolved to make himself happy with these new companions, who had grown so fond of him while following the cow.

"Yes, my friends," said he to them, "this is to be our home. Here we will build our habitations. The brindled cow, which has led us hither, will supply us with milk. We will cultivate the neighboring soil, and lead an innocent and happy life."

His companions joyfully assented to this plan; and, in the first place, being very hungry and thirsty, they looked about them for the means of providing a comfortable meal. Not far off, they saw a tuft of trees, which appeared as if there might be a spring of water beneath

them. They went thither to fetch some, leaving Cadmus stretched on the ground along with the brindled cow; for, now that he had found a place of rest, it seemed as if all the weariness of his pilgrimage, ever since he left King Agenor's palace, had fallen upon him at once. But his new friends had not long been gone, when he was suddenly startled by cries, shouts, and screams, and the noise of a terrible struggle, and in the midst of it all, a most awful hissing, which went right through his ears like a rough saw.

Running toward the tuft of trees, he beheld the head and fiery eyes of an immense serpent or dragon, with the widest jaws that ever a dragon had, and a vast many rows of horribly sharp teeth. Before Cadmus could reach the spot, this pitiless reptile had killed his poor companions, and was busily devouring them, making but a mouthful of each man.

It appears that the fountain of water was enchanted, and that the dragon had been set to guard it, so that no mortal might ever quench his thirst there. As the neighboring inhabitants carefully avoided the spot, it was now a long time (not less than a hundred years, or thereabout) since the monster had broken his fast; and, as was natural enough, his appetite had grown to be enormous, and was not half satisfied by the poor people whom he had just eaten up. When he caught sight of Cadmus, therefore, he set up another abominable hiss, and flung back his immense jaws, until his mouth looked like a great red cavern, at the further end of which were seen

he legs of his last victim, whom he had hardly had time o swallow.

But Cadmus was so enraged at the destruction of his riends, that he cared neither for the size of the dragon's jaws nor for his hundreds of sharp teeth. Drawing his word, he rushed at the monster, and flung himself right nto his cavernous mouth. This bold method of attack- ng him took the dragon by surprise; for, in fact, Cad- nus had leaped so far down into his throat, that the rows of terrible teeth could not close upon him, nor do him he least harm in the world. Thus, though the struggle vas a tremendous one, and though the dragon shattered he tuft of trees into small splinters by the lashing of is tail, yet, as Cadmus was all the while slashing and

solitary place, with not a single human being to help him build a hut.

"What shall I do?" cried he aloud. "It were better for me to have been devoured by the dragon, as my poor companions were."

"Cadmus," said a voice—but whether it came from above or below him, or whether it spoke within his own breast, the young man could not tell—"Cadmus, pluck out the dragon's teeth, and plant them in the earth."

This was a strange thing to do; nor was it very easy, I should imagine, to dig out all those deep-rooted fangs from the dead dragon's jaws. But Cadmus toiled and tugged, and after pounding the monstrous head almost to pieces with a great stone, he at last collected as many teeth as might have filled a bushel or two. The next thing was to plant them. This, likewise, was a tedious piece of work, especially as Cadmus was already exhausted with killing the dragon and knocking his head to pieces, and had nothing to dig the earth with, that I know of, unless it were his sword-blade. Finally, however, a sufficiently large tract of ground was turned up, and sown with this new kind of seed; although half of the dragon's teeth still remained to be planted some other day.

Cadmus, quite out of breath, stood leaning upon his sword, and wondering what was to happen next. He had waited but a few moments, when he began to see a sight, which was as great a marvel as the most marvellous thing I ever told you about.

The sun was shining slantwise over the field, and

showed all the moist, dark soil just like any other newly planted piece of ground. All at once, Cadmus fancied he saw something glisten very brightly, first at one spot, then at another, and then at a hundred and a thousand spots together. Soon he perceived them to be the steel heads of spears, sprouting up everywhere like so many stalks of grain, and continually growing taller and taller. Next appeared a vast number of bright sword-blades, thrusting themselves up in the same way. A moment afterward, the whole surface of the ground was broken up by a multitude of polished brass helmets, coming up like a crop of enormous beans. So rapidly did they grow, that Cadmus now discerned the fierce countenance of a man beneath every one. In short, before he had time to think what a wonderful affair it was, he beheld an abundant harvest of what looked like human beings, armed with helmets and breastplates, shields, swords and spears; and before they were well out of the earth, they brandished their weapons, and clashed them one against another, seeming to think, little while as they had yet lived, that they had wasted too much of life without a battle. Every tooth of the dragon had produced one of these sons of deadly mischief.

Up sprouted, also, a great many trumpeters; and with the first breath that they drew, they put their brazen trumpets to their lips, and sounded a tremendous and ear-shattering blast; so that the whole space, just now so quiet and solitary, reverberated with the clash and clang of arms, the · of warlike music, and the shouts

of angry men. So enraged did they all look, that Cadmus fully expected them to put the whole world to the sword. How fortunate would it be for a great conqueror, if he could get a bushel of the dragon's teeth to sow!

"Cadmus," said the same voice which he had before heard, "throw a stone into the midst of the armed men."

So Cadmus seized a large stone, and, flinging it into the middle of the earth army, saw it strike the breastplate of a gigantic and fierce-looking warrior. Immediately on feeling the blow, he seemed to take it for granted that somebody had struck him; and, uplifting his weapon, he smote his next neighbor a blow that cleft his helmet asunder, and stretched him on the ground. In an instant, those nearest the fallen warrior began to strike at one another with their swords and stab with their spears. The confusion spread wider and wider. Each man smote down his brother, and was himself smitten down before he had time to exult in his victory. The trumpeters, all the while, blew their blasts shriller and shriller; each soldier shouted a battle-cry and often fell with it on his lips. It was the strangest spectacle of causeless wrath, and of mischief for no good end, that had ever been witnessed; but, after all, it was neither more foolish nor more wicked than a thousand battles that have since been fought, in which men have slain their brothers with just as little reason as these children of the dragon's teeth. It ought to be considered, too, that the dragon people were made for nothing else;

whereas other mortals were born to love and help one another.

Well, this memorable battle continued to rage until the ground was strewn with helmeted heads that had been cut off. Of all the thousands that began the fight, there were only five left standing. These now rushed from different parts of the field, and, meeting in the middle of it, clashed their swords, and struck at each other's hearts as fiercely as ever.

"Cadmus," said the voice again, "bid those five warriors sheathe their swords. They will help you to build the city."

Without hesitating an instant, Cadmus stepped forward, with the aspect of a king and a leader, and extend-

aside, would glare at one another, with fire flashing out of their eyes. It was strange, too, to observe how the earth, out of which they had so lately grown, was incrusted, here and there, on their bright breastplates, and even begrimed their faces, just as you may have seen it clinging to beets and carrots when pulled out of their native soil. Cadmus hardly knew whether to consider them as men, or some odd kind of vegetable; although, on the whole, he concluded that there was human nature in them, because they were so fond of trumpets and weapons, and so ready to shed blood.

They looked him earnestly in the face, waiting for his next order, and evidently desiring no other employment than to follow him from one battle-field to another, all over the wide world. But Cadmus was wiser than these earthborn creatures, with the dragon's fierceness in them, and knew better how to use their strength and hardihood.

"Come!" said he. "You are sturdy fellows. Make yourselves useful! Quarry some stones with those great swords of yours, and help me to build a city."

The five soldiers grumbled a little, and muttered that it was their business to overthrow cities, not to build them up. But Cadmus looked at them with a stern eye, and spoke to them in a tone of authority, so that they knew him for their master, and never again thought of disobeying his commands. They set to work in good earnest, and toiled so diligently, that, in a very short time, a city began to make its appearance. At first, to be sure, the workmen showed a quarrelsome disposition. Like

savage beasts, they would doubtless have done one another a mischief, if Cadmus had not kept watch over them and quelled the fierce old serpent that lurked in their hearts, when he saw it gleaming out of their wild eyes. But, in course of time, they got accustomed to honest labor, and had sense enough to feel that there was more true enjoyment in living at peace, and doing good to one's neighbor, than in striking at him with a two-edged sword. It may not be too much to hope that the rest of mankind will by and by grow as wise and peaceable as these five earth-begrimed warriors, who sprang from the dragon's teeth.

And now the city was built, and there was a home in it for each of the workmen. But the palace of Cadmus

fitted the habitation of a mighty king. It had grown up out of the earth in almost as short a time as it had taken the armed host to spring from the dragon's teeth; and what made the matter more strange, no seed of this stately edifice had ever been planted.

When the five workmen beheld the dome, with the morning sunshine making it look golden and glorious, they gave a great shout.

"Long live King Cadmus," they cried, "in his beautiful palace."

And the new king, with his five faithful followers at his heels, shouldering their pickaxes and marching in a rank (for they still had a soldier-like sort of behavior, as their nature was), ascended the palace steps. Halting at the entrance, they gazed through a long vista of lofty pillars that were ranged from end to end of a great hall. At the further extremity of this hall, approaching slowly toward him, Cadmus beheld a female figure, wonderfully beautiful, and adorned with a royal robe, and a crown of diamonds over her golden ringlets, and the richest necklace that ever a queen wore. His heart thrilled with delight. He fancied it his long-lost sister Europa, now grown to womanhood, coming to make him happy, and to repay him, with her sweet sisterly affection, for all those weary wanderings in quest of her since he left King Agenor's palace—for the tears that he had shed, on parting with Phœnix, and Cilix, and Thasus—for the heart-breakings that had made the whole world seem dismal to him over his dear mother's grave.

But, as Cadmus advanced to meet the beautiful stranger, he saw that her features were unknown to him, although, in the little time that it required to tread along the hall, he had already felt a sympathy between himself and her.

"No, Cadmus," said the same voice that had spoken to him in the field of the armed men, "this is not that dear sister Europa whom you have sought so faithfully all over the wide world. This is Harmonia, a daughter of the sky, who is given you instead of sister, and brothers, and friend, and mother. You will find all those dear ones in her alone."

So King Cadmus dwelt in the palace, with his new friend Harmonia, and found a great deal of comfort in

But King Cadmus, lest there should be too much of the dragon's tooth in his children's disposition, used to find time from his kingly duties to teach them their A B C—which he invented for their benefit, and for which many little people, I am afraid, are not half so grateful to him as they ought to be.

THE ADVENTURES OF ULYSSES

By CHARLES LAMB

Chapter I

The Cicons—The Fruit of the Lotos-Tree—Polyphemus and the Cyclops—The Kingdom of the Winds, and God Æolus's Fatal Present—The Læstrygonian Man-Eaters

THIS history tells of the wanderings of Ulysses and his followers in their return from Troy, after the

Landing his forces, he laid siege to their chief city, Ismarus, which he took, and with it much spoil, and slew many people. But success proved fatal to him; for his soldiers, elated with the spoil, and the good store of provisions which they found in that place, fell to eating and drinking, forgetful of their safety, till the Cicons, who inhabited the coast, had time to assemble their friends and allies from the interior; who, mustering in prodigious force, set upon the Grecians, while they negligently revelled and feasted, and slew many of them, and recovered the spoil. They, dispirited and thinned in their numbers, with difficulty made their retreat good to the ships.

Thence they set sail, sad at heart, yet something cheered that with such fearful odds against them they had not all been utterly destroyed. A dreadful tempest ensued, which for two nights and two days tossed them about, but the third day the weather cleared, and they had hopes of a favorable gale to carry them to Ithaca; but, as they doubled the Cape of Malea, suddenly a north wind arising drove them back as far as Cythera. After that, for the space of nine days, contrary winds continued to drive them in an opposite direction to the point to which they were bound; and the tenth day they put in at a shore where a race of men dwell that are sustained by the fruit of the lotus-tree. Here Ulysses sent some of his men to land for fresh water, who were met by certain of the inhabitants, that gave them some of their country food to eat—not with any ill intention toward

them, though in the event it proved pernicious; for, having eaten of this fruit, so pleasant it proved to their appetite that they in a minute quite forgot all thoughts of home, or of their countrymen, or of ever returning back to the ships to give an account of what sort of inhabitants dwelt there, but they would needs stay and live there among them, and eat of that precious food forever; and when Ulysses sent other of his men to look for them, and to bring them back by force, they strove, and wept, and would not leave their food for heaven itself, so much the pleasure of that enchanting fruit had bewitched them. But Ulysses caused them to be bound hand and foot, and cast under the hatches; and set sail with all possible speed from that baneful coast, lest others after them

others, but each doing as he or she thinks good. Ships or boats they have none, nor artificers to make them, no trade or commerce, or wish to visit other shores; yet they have convenient places for harbors and for shipping. Here Ulysses with a chosen party of twelve followers landed, to explore what sort of men dwelt there, whether hospitable and friendly to strangers, or altogether wild and savage, for as yet no dwellers appeared in sight.

The first sight of habitation which they came to was a giant's cave rudely fashioned, but of a size which betokened the vast proportions of its owner; the pillars which supported it being the bodies of huge oaks or pines, in the natural state of the tree, and all about showed more marks of strength than skill in whoever built it. Ulysses, entering in, admired the savage contrivances and artless structure of the place, and longed to see the tenant of so outlandish a mansion; but well conjecturing that gifts would have more avail in extracting courtesy than strength would succeed in forcing it, from such a one as he expected to find the inhabitant, he resolved to flatter his hospitality with a present of Greek wine, of which he had store in twelve great vessels, so strong that no one ever drank it without an infusion of twenty parts of water to one of wine, yet the fragrance of it was even then so delicious that it would have vexed a man who smelled it to abstain from tasting it; but whoever tasted it, it was able to raise his courage to the height of heroic deeds. Taking with them a goat-skin flagon full of this precious liquor, they

ventured into the recesses of the cave. Here they pleased themselves a whole day with beholding the giant's kitchen, where the flesh of sheep and goats lay strewed; his dairy, where goat-milk stood ranged in troughs and pails; his pens, where he kept his wild animals; but those he had driven forth to pasture with him when he went out in the morning. While they were feasting their eyes with a sight of these curiosities, their ears were suddenly deafened with a noise like the falling of a house. It was the owner of the cave, who had been abroad all day feeding his flock, as his custom was, in the mountains, and now drove them home in the evening from pasture. He threw down a pile of fire-wood, which he had been gathering against supper-time, before the mouth of the cave, which occasioned the crash

no more than one eye, and that placed in the midst of their forehead), by the glimmering light he discerned some of Ulysses's men.

"Ho! guests, what are you? Merchants or wandering thieves?" he bellowed out in a voice which took from them all power of reply, it was so astounding.

Only Ulysses summoned resolution to answer, that they came neither for plunder nor traffic, but were Grecians who had lost their way, returning from Troy; which famous city, under the conduct of Agamemnon, the renowned son of Atreus, they had sacked, and laid level with the ground. Yet now they prostrated themselves humbly before his feet, whom they acknowledged to be mightier than they, and besought him that he would bestow the rites of hospitality upon them, for that Jove was the avenger of wrongs done to strangers, and would fiercely resent any injury which they might suffer.

"Fool!" said the Cyclop, "to come so far to preach to me the fear of the gods. We Cyclops care not for your Jove, whom you fable to be nursed by a goat, nor any of your blessed ones. We are stronger than they, and dare bid open battle to Jove himself, though you and all your fellows of the earth join with him." And he bade them tell him where their ship was in which they came, and whether they had any companions. But Ulysses, with a wise caution, made answer that they had no ship or companions, but were unfortunate men, whom the sea, splitting their ship in pieces, had dashed upon his coast, and they alone had escaped. He replied

nothing, but gripping two of the nearest of them, as if they had been no more than children, he dashed their brains out against the earth, and, shocking to relate, tore in pieces their limbs, and devoured them, yet warm and trembling, making a lion's meal of them, lapping the blood; for the Cyclops are man-eaters, and esteem human flesh to be a delicacy far above goat's or kid's; though by reason of their abhorred customs few men approach their coast, except some stragglers, or now and then a shipwrecked mariner. At a sight so horrid, Ulysses and his men were like distracted people. He, when he had made an end of his wicked supper, drained a draught of goat's milk down his prodigious throat, and lay down and slept among his goats. Then Ulysses drew his sword, and half resolved to thrust it with all his

Then Ulysses, of whose strength or cunning the Cyclop seems to have had as little heed as of an infant's, being left alone with the remnant of his men which the Cyclop had not devoured, gave manifest proof how far manly wisdom excels brutish force. He chose a stake from among the wood which the Cyclop had piled up for firing, in length and thickness like a mast, which he sharpened and hardened in the fire; and selected four men, and instructed them what they should do with this stake, and made them perfect in their parts.

When the evening was come, the Cyclop drove home his sheep; and as fortune directed it, either of purpose, or that his memory was overruled by the gods to his hurt (as in the issue it proved), he drove the males of his flock, contrary to his custom, along with the dams into the pens. Then shutting to the stone of the cave, he fell to his horrible supper. When he had despatched two more of the Grecians, Ulysses waxed bold with the contemplation of his project, and took a bowl of Greek wine, and merrily dared the Cyclop to drink.

"Cyclop," he said, "take a bowl of wine from the hand of your guest: it may serve to digest the man's flesh that you have eaten, and show what drink our ship held before it went down. All I ask in recompense, if you find it good, is to be dismissed in a whole skin. Truly you must look to have few visitors, if you observe this new custom of eating your guests."

The brute took and drank, and vehemently enjoyed the taste of wine, which was new to him, and swilled

ain at the flagon, and entreated for more, and prayed lysses to tell him his name, that he might bestow a gift on the man who had given him such brave liquor. he Cyclops, he said, had grapes, but this rich juice, he ore, was simply divine. Again Ulysses plied him with e wine, and the fool drank it as fast as he poured out, and again he asked the name of his benefactor, hich Ulysses, cunningly dissembling said, "My name is oman: my kindred and friends in my own country call e Noman." "Then," said the Cyclop, "this is the ndness I will show thee, Noman: I will eat thee last all thy friends." He had scarce expressed his savage ndness, when the fumes of the strong wine overcame m, and he reeled down upon the floor and sank into a

cavern broke into claps like thunder. They fled, and dispersed into corners. He plucked the burning stake from his eye, and hurled the wood madly about the cave. Then he cried out with a mighty voice for his brethren the Cyclops, that dwelt hard by in caverns upon hills. They, hearing the terrible shout, came flocking from all parts to inquire what ailed Polyphemus, and what cause he had for making such horrid clamors in the night-time to break their sleeps; if his fright proceeded from any mortal; if strength or craft had given him his death-blow. He made answer from within, that Noman had hurt him, Noman had killed him, Noman was with him in the cave. They replied, "If no man has hurt thee, and no man is with thee, then thou art alone; and the evil that afflicts thee is from the hand of heaven, which none can resist or help." So they left him, and went their way, thinking that some disease troubled him. He, blind, and ready to split with the anguish of the pain, went groaning up and down in the dark, to find the door-way; which when he found, he removed the stone, and sat in the threshold, feeling if he could lay hold on any man going out with the sheep, which (the day now breaking) were beginning to issue forth to their accustomed pastures. But Ulysses, whose first artifice in giving himself that ambiguous name had succeeded so well with the Cyclop, was not of a wit so gross to be caught by that palpable device. But casting about in his mind all the ways which he could contrive for escape (no less than all their lives depending on the success), at last he thought

of this expedient. He made knots of the osier twigs upon which the Cyclop commonly slept, with which he tied the fattest and fleeciest of the rams together, three in a rank; and under the middle ram he tied a man, and himself last, wrapping himself fast with both his hands in the rich wool of one, the fairest of the flock.

And now the sheep began to issue forth very fast; the males went first, the females, unmilked, stood by, bleating and requiring the hand of their shepherd in vain to milk them, their full bags sore with being unemptied, but he much sorer with the loss of sight. Still, as the males passed, he felt the backs of those fleecy fools, never dreaming that they carried his enemies under them; so they passed on until the last ram came loaded with his wool and Ulysses together. He stopped that ram and felt him, and had his hand once in the hair of Ulysses, yet knew it not; and he chid the ram for being last, and spoke to it as if it understood him, and asked it whether it did not wish that its master had his eye again, which that abominable Noman with his execrable rout had put out, when they had got him down with wine; and he willed the ram to tell him whereabout in the cave his enemy lurked, that he might dash his brains and strew them about, to ease his heart of that tormenting revenge which rankled in it. After a deal of such foolish talk to the beast, he let it go.

When Ulysses found himself free, he let go his hold, and assisted in disengaging his friends. The rams which had befriended them they carried off with them to the

ships, where their companions with tears in their eyes received them, as men escaped from death. They plied their oars, and set their sails, and when they were got as far off from shore as a voice could reach, Ulysses cried out to the Cyclop: "Cyclop, thou shouldst not have so much abused thy monstrous strength as to devour thy guests. Jove by my hand sends thee requital to pay thy savage inhumanity." The Cyclop heard, and came forth enraged, and in his anger he plucked a fragment of a rock, and threw it with blind fury at the ships. It narrowly escaped lighting upon the bark in which Ulysses sat, but with the fall it raised so fierce an ebb as bore back the ship till it almost touched the shore. "Cyclop," said Ulysses, "if any ask thee who imposed on thee that unsightly blemish in thine eye, say it was Ulysses, son of Laertes: the king of Ithaca am I called, the waster of cities." Then they crowded sail, and beat the old sea, and forth they went with a forward gale; sad for fore-past losses, yet glad to have escaped at any rate; till they came to the isle where Æolus reigned, who is god of the winds.

Here Ulysses and his men were courteously received by the monarch, who showed him his twelve children which have rule over the twelve winds. A month they stayed and feasted with him, and at the end of the month he dismissed them with many presents, and gave to Ulysses at parting an ox's hide, in which were inclosed all the winds: only he left abroad the western wind, to play upon their sails and waft them gently home to

thaca. This bag, bound in a glittering silver band so lose that no breath could escape, Ulysses hung up at he mast. His companions did not know its contents, ut guessed that the monarch had given to him some reasures of gold or silver.

Nine days they sailed smoothly, favored by the west-rn wind, and by the tenth they approached so nigh as o discern lights kindled on the shores of their country arth: when, by ill-fortune, Ulysses, overcome with fa-igue of watching the helm, fell asleep. The mariners eized the opportunity, and one of them said to the rest, A fine time has this leader of ours; wherever he goes e is sure of presents, when we come away empty-handed; nd see what King Æolus has given him, store no doubt f gold and silver." A word was enough to those cove-

having misused his royal bounty (though it was the crime of his followers, and not his own) weighed upon him; and when at last he went, and took a herald with him, and came where the god sat on his throne, feasting with his children, he would not thrust in among them at their meat, but set himself down like one unworthy in the threshold.

Indignation seized Æolus to behold him in that manner returned; and he said, "Ulysses, what has brought you back? Are you so soon tired of your country? or did not our present please you? We thought we had given you a kingly passport." Ulysses made answer: "My men have done this ill mischief to me; they did it while I slept." "Wretch!" said Æolus, "avaunt, and quit our shores! it fits not us to convoy men whom the gods hate, and will have perish!"

Forth they sailed, but with far different hopes than when they left the same harbor the first time with all the winds confined, only the west wind suffered to play upon their sails to waft them in gentle murmurs to Ithaca. They were now the sport of every gale that blew, and despaired of ever seeing home more. Now those covetous mariners were cured of their surfeit for gold, and would not have touched it if it had lain in untold heaps before them. Six days and nights they drove along, and on the seventh day they put into Lamos, a port of the Læstrygonians. So spacious this harbor was that it held with ease all their fleet, which rode at anchor, safe from any storms, all but the ship in which Ulysses was embarked.

He, as if prophetic of the mischance which followed, kept still without the harbor, making fast his bark to a rock at the land's point, which he climbed with purpose to survey the country. He saw a city with smoke ascending from the roofs, but neither plows going, nor oxen yoked, nor any sign of agricultural works. Making choice of two men, he sent them to the city to explore what sort of inhabitants dwelt there. His messengers had not gone far before they met a damsel, of stature surpassing human, who was coming to draw water from a spring. They asked her who dwelt in that land. She made no reply, but led them in silence to her father's palace. He was a monarch, and named Antiphas. He and all his people were giants. When they entered the palace, a woman, the mother of the damsel,

set sail with him from Troy. He pushed off from the shore, cheering the sad remnant of his men, whom horror at the sight of their countrymen's fate had almost turned to marble.

Chapter II

The House of Circe—Men Changed into Beasts—The Voyage to Hell—The Banquet of the Dead

On went the single ship till it came to the Island of Ææa, where Circe, the dreadful daughter of the Sun, dwelt. She was deeply skilled in magic, a haughty beauty, and had hair like the Sun. The Sun was her father, and Perse, daughter to Oceanus, her mother.

Here a dispute arose among Ulysses's men, which of them should go ashore and explore the country; for there was a necessity that some should go to procure water and provisions, their stock of both being nigh spent; but their hearts failed them when they called to mind the shocking fate of their fellows whom the Læstrygonians had eaten, and those which the foul Cyclop Polyphemus had crushed between his jaws; which moved them so tenderly in the recollection that they wept. But tears never yet supplied any man's wants; this Ulysses knew full well, and dividing his men (all that were left) into two companies, at the head of one of which was himself, and at the head of the other Eurylochus, a man of tried courage, he cast lots which of them should go up into the country; and the lot fell upon Eurylochus and his

company, two and twenty in number, who took their leave, with tears, of Ulysses and his men that stayed, whose eyes wore the same wet badges of weak humanity; for they surely thought never to see these their companions again, but that on every coast where they should come, they should find nothing but savages and cannibals.

Eurylochus and his party proceeded up the country, till in a dale they descried the house of Circe, built of bright stone, by the roadside. Before her gate lay many beasts, as wolves, lions, leopards, which, by her art, of wild, she had rendered tame. These arose when they saw strangers, and ramped upon their hinder paws, and fawned upon Eurylochus and his men, who dreaded the effects of such monstrous kindness; and staying at the gate they heard the enchantress within, sitting at her

were transformed into swine, having the bodies of swine, the bristles and snout and grunting noise of that animal; only they still retained the minds of men, which made them the more to lament their brutish transformation. Having changed them, she shut them up in her sty with many more whom her wicked sorceries had formerly changed, and gave them swine's food—mast, and acorns, and chestnuts—to eat.

Eurylochus, who beheld nothing of these sad changes from where he was stationed without the gate, only instead of his companions that entered (who he thought had all vanished by witchcraft) beheld a herd of swine, hurried back to the ship, to give an account of what he had seen; but so frighted and perplexed, that he could give no distinct report of anything; only he remembered a palace, and a woman singing at her work, and gates guarded by lions. But his companions, he said, were all vanished.

Then Ulysses, suspecting some foul witchcraft, snatched his sword and his bow, and commanded Eurylochus instantly to lead him to the place. But Eurylochus fell down, and, embracing his knees, besought him by the name of a man whom the gods had in their protection, not to expose his safety, and the safety of them all, to certain destruction.

"Do thou then stay, Eurylochus," answered Ulysses: "eat thou and drink in the ship of safety, while I go alone upon this adventure: necessity, from whose law is no appeal, compels me."

So saying, he quitted the ship and went on shore, accompanied by none; none had the hardihood to offer to partake that perilous adventure with him, so much they dreaded the enchantments of the witch. Singly he pursued his journey till he came to the shining gates which stood before her mansion; but when he essayed to put his foot over her threshold, he was suddenly stopped by the apparition of a young man, bearing a golden rod in his hand, who was the god Mercury. He held Ulysses by the wrist, to stay his entrance; and "Whither wouldest thou go," he said, "O thou most erring of the sons of men? knowest thou not that this is the house of great Circe, where she keeps thy friends in a loathsome sty, changed from the fair forms of men into the detestable and ugly shapes of swine? Art thou

thinking to change thee, as she has changed thy friends, boldly rush in upon her with thy sword, and extort from her the dreadful oath of the gods, that she will use no enchantments against thee; then force her to restore thy abused companions."

He gave Ulysses the little white flower, and, instructing him how to use it, vanished.

When the god was departed, Ulysses with loud knockings beat at the gate of the palace. The shining gates were opened, as before, and great Circe with hospitable cheer invited in her guest. She placed him on a throne with more distinction than she had used to his fellows; she mingled wine in a costly bowl, and he drank of it, mixed with those poisonous drugs. When he had drunk, she struck him with her charming-rod, and "To your sty!" she cried; "out, swine! mingle with your companions!" But those powerful words were not proof against the preservative which Mercury had given to Ulysses; he remained unchanged, and, as the god had directed him, boldly charged the witch with his sword, as if he meant to take her life; which when she saw, and perceived that her charms were weak against the antidote which Ulysses bore about him, she cried out and bent her knees beneath his sword, embracing his, and said, "Who or what manner of man art thou? Never drank any man before thee of this cup but he repented it in some brute's form. Thy shape remains unaltered as thy mind. Thou canst be none other than Ulysses, renowned above all the world for wisdom, whom the Fates have long since de-

creed that I must love. This haughty bosom bends to thee. O Ithacan, a goddess woos thee."

"O Circe," he replied, "how canst thou treat of love or marriage with one whose friends thou hast turned into beasts, and now offerest him thy hand in wedlock, only that thou mightest have him in thy power, to live the life of a beast with thee, naked, effeminate, subject to thy will, perhaps to be advanced in time to the honor of a place in thy sty? What pleasure canst thou promise which may tempt the soul of a reasonable man—thy meats, spiced with poison; or thy wines, drugged with death? Thou must swear to me that thou wilt never attempt against me the treasons which thou hast practiced upon my friends." The enchantress, won by the terror of his threats, or by the violence of that new love which she

perfumes on his head; and, after he had bathed in a bath of the choicest aromatics, they brought him rich and costly apparel to put on. Then he was conducted to a throne of massy silver, and a regale, fit for Jove when he banquets, was placed before him. But the feast which Ulysses desired was to see his friends (the partners of his voyage) once more in the shapes of men; and the food which could give him nourishment must be taken in at his eyes. Because he missed this sight, he sat melancholy and thoughtful, and would taste of none of the rich delicacies placed before him. Which when Circe noted, she easily divined the cause of his sadness, and leaving the seat in which she sat throned, went to her sty, and let abroad his men, who came in like swine, and filled the ample hall, where Ulysses sat, with gruntings. Hardly had he time to let his sad eye run over their altered forms and brutal metamorphosis, when, with an ointment which she smeared over them, suddenly their bristles fell off, and they started up in their own shapes, men as before. They knew their leader again, and clung about him, with joy of their late restoration, and some shame for their late change; and wept so loud, blubbering out their joy in broken accents, that the palace was filled with a sound of pleasing mourning; and the witch herself, great Circe, was not unmoved at the sight. To make her atonement complete, she sent for the remnant of Ulysses's men who stayed behind at the ship, giving up their great commander for lost; who when they came, and saw him again alive, circled with their fellows, no

expression can tell what joy they felt; they even cried out with rapture, and to have seen their frantic expressions of mirth a man might have supposed that they were just in sight of their country earth, the cliffs of rocky Ithaca. Only Eurylochus would hardly be persuaded to enter that palace of wonders, for he remembered with a kind of horror how his companions had vanished from his sight.

Then great Circe spake, and gave order that there should be no more sadness among them, nor remembering of past sufferings. For as yet they fared like men that are exiles from their country; and if a gleam of mirth shot among them, it was suddenly quenched with the thought of their helpless and homeless condition. Her kind persuasions wrought upon Ulysses and the

when Circe had been lavish of her caresses, and was in her kindest humor, he moved to her subtly, and as it were afar off, the question of his home-return; to which she answered firmly, "O Ulysses, it is not in my power to detain one whom the gods have destined to further trials. But leaving me, before you pursue your journey home, you must visit the house of Hades, or Death, to consult the shade of Tiresias, the Theban prophet; to whom alone, of all the dead, Proserpine, queen of hell, has committed the secret of future events: it is he that must inform you whether you shall ever see again your wife and country." "O Circe," he cried, "that is impossible: who shall steer my course to Pluto's kingdom? Never ship had strength to make that voyage." "Seek no guide," she replied; "but raise you your mast, and hoist your white sails, and sit in your ship in peace: the north wind shall waft you through the seas, till you shall cross the expanse of the ocean and come to where grow the poplar groves and willows pale of Proserpine: where Pyriphlegethon and Cocytus and Acheron mingle their waves. Cocytus is an arm of Styx, the forgetful river. Here dig a pit, and make it a cubit broad and a cubit long; and pour in milk and honey and wine, and the blood of a ram, and the blood of a black ewe; and turn away thy face while thou pourest in, and the dead shall come flocking to taste the milk and the blood: but suffer none to approach thy offering till thou hast inquired of Tiresias all which thou wishest to know."

He did as great Circe had appointed. He raised his mast, and hoisted his white sails, and sat in his ship in peace. The north wind wafted him through the seas till he crossed the ocean, and came to the sacred woods of Proserpine. He stood at the confluence of the three floods, and digged a pit, as she had given directions, and poured in his offering—the blood of a ram, and the blood of a black ewe, milk and honey and wine; and the dead came to his banquet—aged men, and women, and youths, and children who died in infancy. But none of them would he suffer to approach and dip their thin lips in the offering, till Tiresias was served—not though his own mother was among the number, whom now for the first time he knew to be dead; for he had left her living when he went to Troy; and she had died since his departure.

This prophecy, ambiguously delivered, was all that Tiresias was empowered to unfold, or else there was no longer place for him; for now the souls of the other dead came flocking in such numbers, tumultuously demanding the blood, that freezing horror seized the limbs of the living Ulysses, to see so many, and all dead, and he the only one alive in that region. Now his mother came and lapped the blood, without restraint from her son, and now she knew him to be her son, and inquired of him why he had come alive to their comfortless habitations. And she said that affliction for Ulysses's long absence had preyed upon her spirits, and brought her to the grave.

Ulysses's soul melted at her moving narration; and forgetting the state of the dead, and that the airy texture of disembodied spirits does not admit of the embraces of flesh and blood, he threw his arms about her to clasp her: the poor ghost melted from his embrace, and, looking mournfully upon him, vanished away.

Then saw he other women: Tyro, who when she lived was wife of Neptune, and mother of Pelias and Neleus; Antiope, who bore two like sons to Jove, Amphion and Zethus, founders of Thebes; Alcmena, the mother of Hercules, with her fair daughter, afterward her daughter-in-law, Megara. There also Ulysses saw Jocasta, the unfortunate mother and wife of Œdipus; who, ignorant of kin, wedded with her son, and when she had discovered the unnatural alliance, for shame and grief hanged herself. He continued to drag a wretched

life above the earth, haunted by the dreadful Furies. There was Leda, the wife of Tyndarus, the mother of the beautiful Helen, and of the two brave brothers, Castor and Pollux, who obtained this grace from Jove, that, being dead, they should enjoy life alternately, living in pleasant places under the earth. For Pollux had prayed that his brother Castor, who was subject to death, as the son of Tyndarus, should partake of his own immortality, which he derived from an immortal sire. This the Fates denied; therefore Pollux was permitted to divide his immortality with his brother Castor, dying and living alternately. There was Iphimedeia, who bore two sons to Neptune that were giants, Otus and Ephialtes: Earth in her prodigality never nourished bodies to such portentous size and beauty as these two

the blood at that uncomfortable banquet. Ulysses was moved with compassion to see him among them, and asked him what untimely fate had brought him there; if storms had overwhelmed him coming from Troy, or if he had perished in some mutiny by his own soldiers at a division of the prey.

"By none of these," he replied, "did I come to my death; but slain at a banquet to which I was invited by Ægisthus after my return home. He conspiring with my adulterous wife, they laid a scheme for my destruction, training me forth to a banquet as an ox goes to the slaughter; and, there surrounding me, they slew me with all my friends about me.

"Clytemnestra, my wicked wife, forgetting the vows which she swore to me in wedlock, would not lend a hand to close my eyes in death. But nothing is so heaped with impieties as such a woman, who would kill her spouse that married her a maid. When I brought her home to my house a bride, I hoped in my heart that she would be loving to me and to my children. Now her black treacheries have cast a foul aspersion on her whole sex. Blessed husbands will have their loving wives in suspicion for her bad deeds."

"Alas!" said Ulysses, "there seems to be a fatality in your royal house of Atreus, and that they are hated of Jove for their wives. For Helen's sake, your brother Menelaus's wife, what multitudes fell in the wars of Troy!"

Agamemnon replied, "For this cause be not thou

more kind than wise to any woman. Let not thy words express to her at any time all that is in thy mind, keep still some secrets to thyself. But thou by any bloody contrivances of thy wife never needst fear to fall. Exceeding wise she is, and to her wisdom she has a goodness as eminent; Icarius's daughter, Penelope the chaste: we left her a young bride when we parted from our wives to go to the wars, her first child at her breast, the young Telemachus, whom you shall see grown up to manhood on your return, and he shall greet his father with befitting welcomes. My Orestes, my dear son, I shall never see again. His mother has deprived his father of the sight of him, and perhaps will slay him as she slew his sire. But what says fame? is my son yet alive? lives he in Orchomen, or in Pylus, or is he resident in Sparta, in

of the dead? seeing that as alive thou didst surpass all men in glory, thou must needs retain thy pre-eminence here below: so great Achilles triumphs over death."

But Achilles made reply that he had much rather be a peasant-slave upon the earth than reign over all the dead. So much did the inactivity and slothful condition of that state displease his unquenchable and restless spirit. Only he inquired of Ulysses if his father Peleus were living, and how his son Neoptolemus conducted himself.

Of Peleus Ulysses could tell him nothing; but of Neoptolemus he thus bore witness: "From Scyros I convoyed your son by sea to the Greeks: where I can speak of him, for I knew him. He was chief in council, and in the field. When any question was proposed, so quick was his conceit in the forward apprehension of any case, that he ever spoke first, and was heard with more attention than the older heads. Only myself and aged Nestor could compare with him in giving advice. In battle I cannot speak his praise, unless I could count all that fell by his sword. I will only mention one instance of his manhood. When we sat hid in the belly of the wooden horse, in the ambush which deceived the Trojans to their destruction, I, who had the management of that stratagem, still shifted my place from side to side to note the behavior of our men. In some I marked their hearts trembling, through all the pains which they took to appear valiant; and in others tears, that in spite of manly courage would gush forth. And to say truth, it

was an adventure of high enterprise, and as perilous a stake as was ever played in war's game. But in him I could not observe the least sign of weakness; no tears nor tremblings, but his hand still on his good sword, and ever urging me to set open the machine and let us out before the time was come for doing it; and when we sallied out he was still first in that fierce destruction and bloody midnight desolation of King Priam's city."

This made the soul of Achilles to tread a swifter pace, with high-raised feet, as he vanished away, for the joy which he took in his son being applauded by Ulysses.

A sad shade stalked by, which Ulysses knew to be the ghost of Ajax, his opponent, when living, in that famous dispute about the right of succeeding to the arms of the deceased Achilles. They being adjudged

change a word with Ulysses, though he prayed it with many tears and many earnest entreaties. "He might have spoken to me," said Ulysses, "since I spoke to him; but I see the resentments of the dead are eternal."

Then Ulysses saw a throne on which was placed a judge distributing sentence. He that sat on the throne was Minos, and he was dealing out just judgments to the dead. He it is that assigns them their place in bliss or woe.

Then came by a thundering ghost, the large-limbed Orion, the mighty hunter, who was hunting there the ghosts of the beasts which he had slaughtered in desert hills upon the earth. For the dead delight in the occupations which pleased them in the time of their living upon the earth.

There was Tityus suffering eternal pains because he had sought to bring dishonor to Latona, as she passed from Pytho into Panopeus. Two vultures sat perpetually preying upon his liver with their crooked beaks; which as fast as they devoured, is forever renewed; nor can he fray them away with his great hands.

There was Tantalus, plagued for his great sins, standing up to the chin in water, which he can never taste, but still as he bows his head, thinking to quench his burning thirst, instead of water he licks up unsavory dust. All fruits pleasant to the sight, and of delicious flavor, hang in ripe clusters about his head, seeming as though they offered themselves to be plucked by him; but when he reaches out his hand, some wind carries them far out of

is sight into the clouds: so he is starved in the midst f plenty by the righteous doom of Jove, in memory of hat inhuman banquet at which the sun turned pale, hen the unnatural father served up the limbs of his little on in a dish, as meat for his divine guests.

There was Sisyphus, that sees no end to his labors. His punishment is, to be forever rolling up a vast stone o the top of a mountain; which, when it gets to the top, lls down with a crushing weight, and all his work is to e begun again. He was bathed all over in sweat, that eeked out a smoke which covered his head like a mist. His crime had been the revealing of state secrets.

There Ulysses saw Hercules—not that Hercules who njoys immortal life in heaven among the gods, and is arried to Hebe, or Youth; but his shadow, which re-

The Adventures of Ulysses

Chapter III

The Song of the Sirens—Scylla and Charybdis—The Oxen of the Sun—The Judgment—The Crew killed by Lightning

"Unhappy man, who at thy birth wast appointed twice to die! Others shall die once; but thou, besides that death that remains for thee, common to all men, hast in thy lifetime visited the shades of death. Thee Scylla, thee Charybdis, expect. Thee the dreadful Sirens lie in wait for, that taint the minds of whoever listen to them with their sweet singing. Whosoever shall but hear the call of any Siren, he will so despise both wife and children through their sorceries that the stream of his affection never again shall set homeward, nor shall he take joy in wife or children thereafter, or they in him."

With these prophetic greetings great Circe met Ulysses on his return. He besought her to instruct him in the nature of the Sirens, and by what method their baneful allurements were to be resisted.

"They are sisters three," she replied, "that sit in a mead (by which your ship must needs pass) circled with dead men's bones. These are the bones of men whom they have slain, after with fawning invitements they have enticed them into their fen. Yet such is the celestial harmony of their voices, accompanying the persuasive magic of their words, that, knowing this, you shall not be able to withstand their enticements. Therefore, when you are to sail by them, you shall stop the ears of your companions with wax, that they may hear no note of

hat dangerous music; but for yourself, that you may ear, and yet live, give them strict command to bind you and and foot to the mast, and in no case to set you free ll you are out of the danger of the temptation, though ou should entreat it, and implore it ever so much, but o bind you rather the more for your requesting to be oosed. So shall you escape that snare."

Ulysses then prayed her that she would inform him hat Scylla and Charybdis were, which she had taught im by name to fear. She replied: "Sailing from Ææa o Trinacria, you must pass at an equal distance between vo fatal rocks. Incline never so little either to the one de or the other, and your ship must meet with certain estruction. No vessel ever yet tried that pass without eing lost but the *Argo*, which owed her safety to the

caught, the force of Neptune cannot redeem you from her swallow. Better trust to Scylla, for she will but have for her six necks six men: Charybdis in her insatiate draught will ask all."

Then Ulysses inquired, in case he should escape Charybdis, whether he might not assail that other monster with his sword; to which she replied that he must not think that he had an enemy subject to death, or wounds, to contend with, for Scylla could never die. Therefore, his best safety was in flight, and to invoke none of the gods but Cratis, who is Scylla's mother, and might perhaps forbid her daughter to devour them. For his conduct after he arrived at Trinacria she referred him to the admonitions which had been given him by Tiresias.

Ulysses having communicated her instructions, as far as related to the Sirens, to his companions, who had not been present at that interview, but concealing from them the rest, as he had done the terrible predictions of Tiresias, that they might not be deterred by fear from pursuing their voyage—the time for departure being come, they set their sails, and took a final leave of great Circe; who by her art calmed the heavens, and gave them smooth seas, and a right forewind (the seaman's friend) to bear them on their way to Ithaca.

They had not sailed past a hundred leagues before the breeze which Circe had lent them suddenly stopped. It was stricken dead. All the sea lay in prostrate slumber. Not a gasp of air could be felt. The ship stood still. Ulysses guessed that the island of the Sirens was

ot far off, and that they had charmed the air so with heir devilish singing. Therefore he made him cakes of vax, as Circe had instructed him, and stopped the ears f his men with them; then causing himself to be bound and and foot, he commanded the rowers to ply their ars and row as fast as speed could carry them past that ıtal shore. They soon came within sight of the Sirens, vho sang in Ulysses's hearing:

"Come here, thou, worthy of a world of praise,
That dost so high the Grecian glory raise,—
Ulysses! Stay thy ship, and that song hear
That none pass'd ever, but it bent his ear,
But left him ravish'd, and instructed more
By us than any ever heard before.
For we know all things—whatsoever were
In wide Troy labor'd; whatsoever there
The Grecians and the Trojans both sustain'd,
By those high issues that the gods ordain'd:

only moved faster. And still the Sirens sang. And still the more he adjured them to set him free, the faster with cords and ropes they bound him; till they were quite out of hearing of the Sirens' notes, whose effect great Circe had so truly predicted. And well she might speak of them, for often she had joined her own enchanting voice to theirs, while she has sat in the flowery meads, mingled with the Sirens and the Water Nymphs, gathering their potent herbs and drugs of magic quality. Their singing all together has made the gods stoop, and "heaven drowsy with the harmony."

Escaped that peril, they had not sailed yet a hundred leagues further, when they heard a roar afar off, which Ulysses knew to be the barking of Scylla's dogs, which surround her waist, and bark incessantly. Coming nearer they beheld a smoke ascend, with a horrid murmur, which rose from that other whirlpool, to which they made nigher approaches than to Scylla. Through the furious eddy, which is in that place, the ship stood still as a stone; for there was no man to lend his hand to an oar: the dismal roar of Scylla's dogs at a distance, and the nearer clamors of Charybdis, where everything made an echo, quite taking from them the power of exertion. Ulysses went up and down encouraging his men, one by one, giving them good words; telling them that they were in greater perils when they were blocked up in the Cyclop's cave, yet, heaven assisting his counsels, he had delivered them out of that extremity;—that he could not believe but they remembered it; and wished

hem to give the same trust to the same care which he ad now for their welfare;—that they must exert all the trength and wit which they had, and try if Job would ot grant them an escape, even out of this peril. In articular he cheered up the pilot who sat at the helm, nd told him that he must show more firmness than ther men, as he had more trust committed to him; nd had the sole management, by his skill, of the vessel n which all their safeties were embarked;—that a rock ay hid within those boiling whirlpools which he saw, on he outside of which he must steer, if he would avoid his wn destruction and the destruction of them all.

They heard him, and like men took to the oars; but ittle knew what opposite danger, in shunning that rock, hey must be thrown upon. For Ulysses had concealed

more dreaded; for they saw how horribly Charybdis's black throat drew into her all the whirling deep, which she disgorged again, that all about her boiled like a kettle, and the rock roared with troubled waters; which when she supped in again, all the bottom turned up, and disclosed far under shore the swart sands naked, whose whole stern sight frayed the startled blood from their faces, and made Ulysses turn his to view the wonder of whirlpools. Which when Scylla saw from out her black den, she darted out her six long necks, and swooped up as many of his friends: whose cries Ulysses heard, and saw them too late, with their heels turned up, and their hands thrown to him for succor, who had been their help in all extremities, but could not deliver them now; and he heard them shriek as she tore them, and to the last they continued to throw their hands out to him for sweet life. In all his sufferings he never had beheld a sight so full of miseries.

Escaped from Scylla and Charybdis, but with a diminished crew, Ulysses and the sad remains of his followers reached the Trinacrian shore. Here landing, he beheld oxen grazing of such surpassing size and beauty that, both from them and from the shape of the island (having three promontories jutting into the sea), he judged rightly that he was come to the Triangular Island and the oxen of the Sun, of which Tiresias had forewarned him.

So great was his terror lest through his own fault, or that of his men, any violence or profanation should be offered to the holy oxen, that even then, tired as they

were with the perils and fatigues of the day past, and unable to stir an oar, or use any exertion, and though night was fast coming on, he would have had them re-embark immediately, and make the best of their way from that dangerous station; but his men with one voice resolutely opposed it, and even the too cautious Eurylochus himself withstood the proposal; so much did the temptation of a little ease and refreshment (ease tenfold sweet after such labors) prevail over the sagest counsels, and the apprehension of certain evil outweigh the prospect of contingent danger. They expostulated that the nerves of Ulysses seemed to be made of steel, and his limbs not liable to lassitude like other men's; that waking or sleeping seemed indifferent to him; but that they were men, not gods, and felt the common appetites for food and sleep; that in the night-time, all the winds most destructive to ships are generated; that black night still required to be served with meat and sleep, and quiet havens and ease; that the best sacrifice to the sea was in the morning. With such sailor-like saying and mutinous arguments, which the majority have always ready to justify disobedience to their betters, they forced Ulysses to comply with their requisition, and against his will to take up his night quarters on shore. But he first exacted from them an oath that they would neither maim nor kill any of the cattle which they saw grazing, but content themselves with such food as Circe had stowed their vessel with when they parted from Ææa. This they man by man severally promised, imprecating the heaviest

curses on whoever should break it; and mooring their bark within a creek, they went to supper, contenting themselves that night with such food as Circe had given them, not without many sad thoughts of their friends whom Scylla had devoured, the grief of which kept them great part of the night waking.

In the morning, Ulysses urged them again to a religious observance of the oath that they had sworn, not in any case to attempt the blood of those fair herds which they saw grazing, but to content themselves with the ship's food; for the god who owned those cattle sees and hears all.

They faithfully obeyed, and remained in that good mind for a month; during which they were confined to that station by contrary winds, till all the wine and the bread were gone which they had brought with them. When their victuals were gone, necessity compelled them to stray in quest of whatever fish or fowl they could snare, which that coast did not yield in any great abundance. Then Ulysses prayed to all the gods that dwelt in bountiful heaven, that they would be pleased to yield them some means to stay their hunger, without having recourse to profane and forbidden violations; but the ears of heaven seemed to be shut, or some god incensed plotted his ruin; for at mid-day, when he should chiefly have been vigilant and watchful to prevent mischief, a deep sleep fell upon the eyes of Ulysses, during which he lay totally insensible of all that passed in the world, and what his friends or what his enemies might do for

his welfare or destruction. Then Eurylochus took his advantage. He was the man of most authority with them after Ulysses. He represented to them all the misery of their condition; how that every death is hateful and grievous to mortality, but that of all deaths famine is attended with the most painful, loathsome, and humiliating circumstances; that the subsistence which they could hope to draw from fowling or fishing was too precarious to be depended upon; that there did not seem to be any chance of the winds changing to favor their escape, but that they must inevitably stay there and perish, if they let an irrational superstition deter them from the means which Nature offered to their hands; that Ulysses might be deceived in his belief that these oxen had any sacred qualities above other oxen; and even admitting that they were the property of the god of the Sun, as he said they were, the Sun did neither eat nor drink, and the gods were best served not by a scrupulous conscience, but by a thankful heart, which took freely what they as freely offered. With these and such like persuasions he prevailed on his half-famished and half-mutinous companions to begin the impious violation of their oath by the slaughter of seven of the fairest of these oxen which were grazing. Part they roasted and ate, and part they offered in sacrifice to the gods, particularly to Apollo, god of the Sun, vowing to build a temple to his godhead when they should arrive in Ithaca, and deck it with magnificent and numerous gifts. Vain men! and superstition worse than that which they had so

lately derided! to imagine that prospective penitence can excuse a present violation of duty, and that the pure natures of the heavenly powers will admit of compromise or dispensation for sin!

But to their feast they fell, dividing the roasted portions of the flesh, savory and pleasant meat to them, but a sad sight to the eyes, and a savor of death in the nostrils, of the waking Ulysses, who just woke in time to witness, but not soon enough to prevent, their rash and sacrilegious banquet. He had scarce time to ask what great mischief was this which they had done unto him; when behold, a prodigy! the ox-hides which they had stripped began to creep as if they had life; and the roasted flesh bellowed as the ox used to do when he was living. The hair of Ulysses stood up on end with affright at these omens; but his companions, like men whom the gods had infatuated to their destruction, persisted in their horrible banquet.

The Sun from his burning chariot saw how Ulysses's men had slain his oxen, and he cried to his father Jove, "Revenge me upon these impious men who have slain my oxen, which it did me good to look upon when I walked my heavenly round. In all my daily course I never saw such bright and beautiful creatures as those my oxen were." The father promised that ample retribution should be taken of those accursed men: which was fulfilled shortly after, when they took their leaves of the fatal island.

Six days they feasted in spite of the signs of heaven,

and on the seventh, the wind changing, they set their sails and left the island; and their hearts were cheerful with the banquets they had held; all but the heart of Ulysses, which sank within him, as with wet eyes he beheld his friends, and gave them for lost, as men devoted to divine vengeance. Which soon overtook them; for they had not gone many leagues before a dreadful tempest arose, which burst their cables; down came their mast, crushing the skull of the pilot in its fall: off he fell from the stern into the water; and the bark, wanting his management, drove along at the wind's mercy. Thunders roared, and terrible lightnings of Jove came down: first a bolt struck Eurylochus, then another, and then another, till all the crew were killed, and their bodies swam about like sea-mews; and the ship was split in pieces. Only Ulysses survived; and he had no hope of safety but in tying himself to the mast, where he sat riding upon the waves, like one that in no extremity would yield to fortune. Nine days was he floating about with all the motions of the sea, with no other support than the slender mast under him, till the tenth night cast him, all spent and weary with toil, upon the friendly shores of the island Ogygia.

Chapter IV

The Island of Calypso—Immortality Refused

Henceforth the adventures of the single Ulysses must be pursued. Of all those faithful partakers of his

toil, who with him left Asia, laden with the spoils of Troy, now not one remains, but all a prey to the remorseless waves, and food for some great fish; their gallant navy reduced to one ship, and that finally swallowed up and lost. Where now are all their anxious thoughts of home? that perseverance with which they went through the severest sufferings and the hardest labors to which poor seafarers were ever exposed, that their toils at last might be crowned with the sight of their native shores and wives at Ithaca! Ulysses is now in the isle Ogygia, called the Delightful Island. The poor shipwrecked chief, the slave of all the elements, is once again raised by the caprice of fortune into a shadow of prosperity. He that was cast naked upon the shore, bereft of all his companions, has now a goddess to attend upon him, and his companions are the nymphs which never die. Who has not heard of Calypso? her grove crowned with alders and poplars; her grotto, against which the luxuriant vine laid forth his purple grapes; her ever-new delights, crystal fountains, running brooks, meadows flowering with sweet balm-gentle and with violet; blue violets which like veins enamelled the smooth breasts of each fragrant mead?

It were useless to describe over again what has been so well told already, or to relate those soft arts of courtship which the goddess used to detain Ulysses; the same in kind which she afterward practiced upon his less wary son, whom Athene, in the shape of Mentor, hardly preserved from her snares, when they came to the De-

lightful Island together in search of the scarce departed Ulysses.

A memorable example of married love, and a worthy instance how dear to every good man his country is, was exhibited by Ulysses. If Circe loved him sincerely, Calypso loves him with tenfold more warmth and passion: she can deny him nothing, but his departure; she offers him everything, even to a participation of her immortality —if he will stay and share in her pleasures, he shall never die. But death with glory has greater charms for a mind heroic than a life that shall never die with shame; and when he pledged his vows to his Penelope, he reserved no stipulation that he would forsake her whenever a goddess should think him worthy, but they had sworn to live and grow old together; and he would not survive

seas, and took in his hand his golden rod, the ensign of his authority. Then wheeling in many an airy round, he stayed not till he alighted on the firm top of the mountain Pieria; thence he fetched a second circuit over the seas, kissing the waves in his flight with his feet, as light as any sea-mew fishing dips her wings, till he touched the isle Ogygia, and soared up from the blue sea to the grotto of the goddess to whom his errand was ordained.

His message struck a horror, checked by love, through all the faculties of Calypso. She replied to it, incensed: "You gods are insatiate, past all that live, in all things which you affect; which makes you so envious and grudging. It afflicts you to the heart when any goddess seeks the love of a mortal man in marriage, though you yourselves without scruple link yourselves to women of the earth. So it fared with you, when the delicious-fingered Morning shared Orion's love; you could never satisfy your hate and your jealousy till you had incensed dame Diana, who leads the precise life, to come upon him by stealth in Ortygia, and pierce him through with her arrows. And when rich-haired Ceres gave the reins to her affections, and took Iasion (well worthy) the secret was not so cunningly kept but Jove had soon notice of it; and the poor mortal paid for his felicity with death, struck through with lightnings. And now you envy me the possession of a wretched man whom tempests have cast upon my shores, making him lawfully mine; whose ship Jove rent in pieces with his hot thunderbolts, killing

all his friends. Him I have preserved, loved, nourished; made him mine by protection, my creature; by every tie of gratitude, mine; have vowed to make him deathless like myself; him you will take from me. But I know your power, and that it is vain for me to resist. Tell your king that I obey his mandates."

With an ill grace Calypso promised to fulfil the commands of Jove; and, Mercury departing, she went to find Ulysses, where he sat outside the grotto, not knowing of the heavenly message, drowned in discontent, not seeing any human probability of his ever returning home.

She said to him: "Unhappy man, no longer afflict yourself with pining after your country, but build you a ship, with which you may return home, since it is the will of the gods; who, doubtless, as they are greater in power than I, are greater in skill, and best can tell what is fittest for man. But I call the gods and my inward conscience to witness that I had no thought but what stood with thy safety, nor would have done or counselled anything against thy good. I persuaded thee to nothing which I should not have followed myself in thy extremity; for my mind is innocent and simple. Oh, if thou knewest what dreadful sufferings thou must yet endure before ever thou reachest thy native land, thou wouldest not esteem so hardly of a goddess's offer to share her immortality with thee; nor for a few years' enjoyment of a perishing Penelope, refuse an imperishable and never-dying life with Calypso."

He replied: "Ever-honored, great Calypso, let it not

displease thee, that I a mortal man desire to see and converse again with a wife that is mortal: human objects are best fitted to human infirmities. I well know how far in wisdom, in feature, in stature, proportion, beauty, in all the gifts of the mind, thou exceedest my Penelope: she is mortal, and subject to decay; thou immortal, ever growing, yet never old; yet in her sight all my desires terminate, all my wishes—in the sight of her, and of my country earth. If any god, envious of my return, shall lay his dreadful hand upon me as I pass the seas, I submit; for the same powers have given me a mind not to sink under oppression. In wars and waves my sufferings have not been small."

She heard his pleaded reasons, and of force she must assent; so to her nymphs she gave in charge from her sacred woods to cut down timber, to make Ulysses a ship. They obeyed, though in a work unsuitable to their soft fingers; yet to obedience no sacrifice is hard; and Ulysses busily bestirred himself, laboring far more hard than they, as was fitting, till twenty tall trees, driest and fittest for timber, were felled. Then, like a skilful shipwright, he fell to joining the planks, using the plane, the axe, and the auger with such expedition that in four days' time a ship was made, complete with all her decks, hatches, sideboards, yards. Calypso added linen for the sails, and tackling; and when she was finished, she was a goodly vessel for a man to sail in, alone or in company, over the wide seas. By the fifth morning she was launched; and Ulysses, furnished with store of provisions, rich garments,

and gold and silver, given him by Calypso, took a last leave of her and of her nymphs, and of the isle of Ogygia which had so befriended him.

Chapter V

The Tempest—The Sea-Bird's Gift—The Escape by Swimming—The Sleep in the Woods

At the stern of his solitary ship Ulysses sat, and steered right artfully. No sleep could seize his eyelids. He beheld the Pleiads, the Bear, which is by some called the Wain, that moves round about Orion, and keeps still above the ocean, and the slow-setting sign Boötes, which some name the Wagoner. Seventeen days he held his course, and on the eighteenth the coast of Phæacia was in sight. The figure of the land, as seen from the sea, was pretty and circular, and looked something like a shield.

Neptune, returning from visiting his favorite Æthiopians, from the mountains of the Solymi descried Ulysses plowing the waves, his domain. The sight of the man he so much hated for Polyphemus's sake, his son, whose eye Ulysses had put out, set the god's heart on fire; and snatching into his hand his horrid sea-sceptre, the trident of his power, he smote the air and the sea, and conjured up all his black storms, calling down night from the cope of heaven, and taking the earth into the sea, as it seemed, with clouds, through the darkness and indistinctness which prevailed; the billows

rolling up before the fury of all the winds, that contended together in their mighty sport.

Then the knees of Ulysses bent with fear, and then all his spirit was spent, and he wished that he had been among the number of his countrymen who fell before Troy, and had their funerals celebrated by all the Greeks, rather than to perish thus, where no man could mourn him or know him.

As he thought these melancholy thoughts, a huge wave took him and washed him overboard, ship and all upset amid the billows, he struggling afar off, clinging to her stern broken off which he yet held, her mast cracking in two with the fury of that gust of mixed winds that struck it, sails and sail-yards fell into the deep, and he himself was long drowned under water, nor could get his head above, wave so met with wave, as if they strove which should depress him most; and the gorgeous garments given him by Calypso clung about him, and hindered his swimming; yet neither for this, nor for the overthrow of his ship, nor his own perilous condition, would he give up his drenched vessel; but, wrestling with Neptune, got at length hold of her again, and then sat in her hull, insulting over death, which he had escaped, and the salt waves which he gave the seas again to give to other men; his ship, striving to live, floated at random, cuffed from wave to wave, hurled to and fro by all the winds: now Boreas tossed it to Notus, Notus passed it to Eurus, and Eurus to the West Wind, who kept up the horrid tennis.

Them in their mad sport Ino Leucothea beheld—Ino Leucothea, now a sea-goddess, but once a mortal and the daughter of Cadmus; she with pity beheld Ulysses the mark of their fierce contention, and rising from the waves alighted on the ship, in shape like to the sea-bird which is called a cormorant; and in her beak she held a wonderful girdle made of sea-weeds, which grow at the bottom of the ocean, which she dropped at his feet; and the bird spake to Ulysses, and counselled him not to trust any more to that fatal vessel against which god Neptune had levelled his furious wrath, nor to those ill-befriending garments which Calypso had given him, but to quit both it and them, and trust for his safety to swimming. "And here," said the seeming bird, "take this girdle and tie about your middle, which has virtue to protect the wearer at sea, and you shall safely reach the shore; but when you have landed, cast it far from you back into the sea." He did as the sea-bird instructed him; he stripped himself naked, and, fastening the wonderous girdle about his middle, cast himself into the seas to swim. The bird dived past his sight into the fathomless abyss of the ocean.

Two days and two nights he spent in struggling with the waves, though sore buffeted, and almost spent, never giving up himself for lost; such confidence he had in that charm which he wore about his middle, and in the words of that divine bird. But the third morning the winds grew calm and all the heavens were clear. Then he saw himself nigh land, which he knew to be the coast

of the Phæacians, a people goods to strangers and abounding in ships, by whose favor he doubted not that he should soon obtain a passage to his own country. And such joy he conceived in his heart as good sons have that esteem their father's life dear, when long sickness has held him down to his bed and wasted his body, and they see at length health return to the old man, with restored strength and spirits, in reward of their many prayers to the gods for his safety: so precious was the prospect of home-return to Ulysses, that he might restore health to his country (his better parent), that had long languished as full of distempers in his absence. And then for his own safety's sake he had joy to see the shores, the woods, so nigh and within his grasp as they seemed, and he labored with all the might of hands and feet to reach with swimming that nigh-seeming land.

But when he approached near, a horrid sound of a huge sea beating against rocks informed him that here was no place for landing, nor any harbor for man's resort; but through the weeds and the foam which the sea belched up against the land he could dimly discover the rugged shore all bristled with flints, and all that part of the coast one impending rock that seemed impossible to climb, and the water all about so deep that not a sand was there for any tired foot to rest upon; and every moment he feared lest some wave more cruel than the rest should crush him against a cliff, rendering worse than vain all his landing; and should he swim to seek a more commodious haven further on, he was fearful lest, weak and spent as

he was, the winds would force him back a long way off into the main, where the terrible god Neptune, for wrath that he had so nearly escaped his power, having gotten him again into his domain, would send out some great whale (of which those seas breed a horrid number) to swallow him up alive; with such malignity he still pursued him.

While these thoughts distracted him with diversity of dangers, one bigger wave drove against a sharp rock his naked body, which it gashed and tore, and wanted little of breaking all his bones, so rude was the shock. But in this extremity she prompted him that never failed him at need. Athené (who is Wisdom itself) put it into his thoughts no longer to keep swimming off and on, as one dallying with danger, but boldly to force the shore that threatened him, and to hug the rock that had torn him so rudely; which with both hands he clasped, wrestling with extremity, till the rage of that billow which had driven him upon it was passed; but then again the rock drove back that wave so furiously that it reft him of his hold, sucking him with it in its return; and the sharp rock, his cruel friend, to which he clung for succor, rent the flesh so sore from his hands in parting that he fell off, and could sustain no longer; quite under water he fell, and, past the help of fate, there had the hapless Ulysses lost all portion that he had in this life, if Athené had not prompted his wisdom in that peril to essay another course, and to explore some other shelter, ceasing to attempt that landing-place.

She guided his wearied and nigh-exhausted limbs to the mouth of the fair river Callirhoë, which not far from thence disbursed its watery tribute to the ocean. Here the shores were easy and accessible, and the rocks, which rather adorned than defended its banks, so smooth that they seemed polished of purpose to invite the landing of our sea-wanderer, and to atone for the uncourteous treatment which those less hospitable cliffs had afforded him. And the god of the river, as if in pity, stayed his current, and smoothed his waters, to make his landing more easy; for sacred to the ever-living deities of the fresh waters, be they mountain-stream, river, or lake, is the cry of erring mortals that seek their aid, by reason that, being inland-bred, they partake more of the gentle humanities of our nature than those marine deities whom Neptune trains up in tempests in the unpitying recesses of his salt abyss.

So by the favor of the river's god Ulysses crept to land half-drowned; both his knees faltering, his strong hands falling down through weakness from the excessive toils he had endured, his cheeks and nostrils flowing with froth of the sea-brine, much of which he had swallowed in that conflict, voice and breath spent, down he sank as in death. Dead weary he was. It seemed that the sea had soaked through his heart, and the pains he felt in all his veins were little less than those which one feels that has endured the torture of the rack. But when his spirits came a little to themselves, and his recollection by degrees began to return, he rose up, and unloosing from his waist the girdle or charm which that divine bird had

iven him, and remembering the charge which he had re-eived with it, he flung it far from him into the river. ack it swam with the course of the ebbing stream till it eached the sea, where the fair hands of Ino Leucothea eceived it to keep it as a pledge of safety to any future hipwrecked mariner that, like Ulysses, should wander in hose perilous waves.

Then he kissed the humble earth in token of safety, nd on he went by the side of that pleasant river, till he ame where a thicker shade of rushes that grew on its anks seemed to point out the palace where he might est his sea-wearied limbs. And here a fresh perplexity ivided his mind, whether he should pass the night, hich was coming on, in that place, where, though he ared no other enemies, the damps and frosts of the chill

their branches, nor the sun's scorching beams to pierce their recesses, nor any shower to beat through, they grew so thick, and as it were folded each in the other. Here creeping in, he made his bed of the leaves which were beginning to fall, of which was such abundance that two or three men might have spread them ample coverings, such as might shield them from the winter's rage, though the air breathed steel and blew as it would burst. Here creeping in, he heaped up store of leaves all about him as a man would billets upon a winter fire, and lay down in the midst. Rich seed of virtue lying hid in poor leaves! Here Athené soon gave him sound sleep; and here all his long toils past seemed to be concluded and shut up within the little sphere of his refreshed and closed eyelids.

Chapter VI

The Princess Nausicaa—The Washing—The Game with the Ball—The Court of Phæacia and King Alcinous

Meantime Athené, designing an interview between the king's daughter of that country and Ulysses when he should awake, went by night to the palace of King Alcinous, and stood at the bedside of the princess Nausicaa in the shape of one of her favorite attendants, and thus addressed the sleeping princess:

"Nausicaa, why do you lie sleeping here, and never bestow a thought upon your bridal ornaments, of which you have many and beautiful, laid up in your wardrobe

against the day of your marriage, which cannot be far distant; when you shall have need of all, not only to deck your own person, but to give away in presents to the virgins that honoring you shall attend you to the temple? Your reputation stands much upon the timely care of these things; these things are they which fill father and reverend mother with delight. Let us arise betimes to wash your fair vestments of linen and silks in the river; and request your sire to lend you mules and a coach, for your wardrobe is heavy, and the place where we must wash is distant; and besides it fits not a great princess like you to go so far on foot."

So saying, she went away, and Nausicaa awoke, full of pleasing thoughts of her marriage, which the dream had told her was not far distant; and as soon as it was dawn she arose and dressed herself, and went to find her parents.

The queen her mother was already up, and seated among her maids, spinning at her wheel, as the fashion was in those primitive times, when great ladies did not disdain housewifery: and the king her father was preparing to go abroad at that early hour to counsel with his grave senate.

"My father," she said, "will you not order mules and a coach to be got ready, that I may go and wash, I and my maids, at the cisterns that stand without the city?"

"What washing does my daughter speak of?" said Alcinous.

"Mine and my brothers' garments," she replied, "that have contracted soil by this time by lying by so long in the wardrobe. Five sons have you that are my brothers; two of them are married, and three are bachelors; these last it concerns to have their garments neat and unsoiled; it may advance their fortunes in marriage; and who but I their sister should have care of these things? You yourself, my father, have need of the whitest apparel when you go, as now, to the council."

She used this plea, modestly dissembling her care of her own nuptials to her father; who was not displeased at this instance of his daughter's discretion; for a seasonable care about marriage may be permitted to a young maiden, provided it be accompanied with modesty and dutiful submission to her parents in the choice of her future husband; and there was no fear of Nausicaa choosing wrongly or improperly; for she was as wise as she was beautiful, and the best in all Phæacia were suitors to her for her love. So Alcinous readily gave consent that she should go, ordering mules and a coach to be prepared. And Nausicaa brought from her chamber all her vestments, and laid them up in the coach; and her mother placed bread and wine in the coach, and oil in a golden cruse, to soften the bright skins of Nausicaa and her maids when they came out of the river.

Nausicaa, making her maids get up into the coach with her, drove the mules, till they brought her to the cisterns which stood a little on the outside of the town, and were supplied with water from the river Callirhoë.

There her attendants unyoked the mules, took out the clothes, and steeped them in the cisterns, washing them in several waters, and afterward treading them clean with their feet; venturing wagers who should have done soonest and cleanest, and using many pretty pastimes to beguile their labor as young maids use, while the princess looked on. When they had laid their clothes to dry, they fell to playing again; and Nausicaa joined them in a game with the ball, which is used in that country; which is performed by tossing the ball from hand to hand with great expedition, she who begins the pastime singing a song. It chanced that the princess, whose turn it became to toss the ball, sent it so far from its mark, that it fell beyond into one of the cisterns of the river; at which the whole company, in merry consternation, set up a shriek so loud that it waked the sleeping Ulysses, who was taking his rest, after his long toils, in the woods, not far distant from the place where young maids had come to wash.

At the sound of female voices, Ulysses crept forth from his retirement, making himself a covering with boughs and leaves as well as he could to shroud his nakedness. The sudden appearance of his weather-beaten and almost naked form so frightened the maidens that they scudded away into the woods and all about to hide themselves, only Athené (who had brought about this interview to admirable purposes, by seemingly accidental means) put courage into the breast of Nausicaa, and she stayed where she was, and resolved to know

what manner of man he was, and what was the occasion of his strange coming to them.

He, not venturing (for delicacy) to approach and clasp her knees, as suppliants should, but standing far off, addressed this speech to the young princess:

"Before I presume rudely to press my petitions, I should first ask whether I am addressing a mortal woman, or one of the goddesses. If a goddess, you seem to me to be likest to Diana, the chaste huntress, the daughter of Jove. Like hers are your lineaments, your stature, your features, and air divine."

She making answer that she was no goddess, but a mortal maid, he continued:

"If a woman, thrice blessed are both the authors of your birth; thrice blessed are your brothers, who even to rapture must have joy in your perfections, to see you grown so like a young tree, and so graceful. But most blessed of all that breathe is he that has the gift to engage your young neck in the yoke of marriage. I never saw that man that was worthy of you. I never saw man or woman that at all parts equalled you. Lately at Delos (where I touched) I saw a young palm which grew beside Apollo's temple; it exceeded all the trees which ever I beheld for straightness and beauty: I can compare you only to that. A stupor past admiration strikes me, joined with fear, which keeps me back from approaching you, to embrace your knees. Nor is it strange; for one of freshest and firmest spirit would falter, approaching near to so bright an object: but I am one whom a cruel habit

of calamity has prepared to receive strong impressions. Twenty days the unrelenting seas have tossed me up and down coming from Ogygia, and at length cast me shipwrecked last night upon your coast. I have seen no man or woman since I landed but yourself. All that I crave is clothes, which you may spare me, and to be shown the way to some neighboring town. The gods, who have care of strangers, will requite you for these courtesies."

She, admiring to hear such complimentary words proceed out of the mouth of one whose outside looked so rough and unpromising, made answer: "Stranger, I discern neither sloth nor folly in you, and yet I see that you are poor and wretched: from which I gather that neither wisdom nor industry can secure felicity; only Jove bestows it upon whomsoever he pleases. He perhaps has reduced you to this plight. However, since your wanderings have brought you so near to our city, it lies in our duty to supply your wants. Clothes, and what else a human hand should give to one so suppliant, and so tamed with calamity, you shall not want. We will show you our city and tell you the name of our people. This the land of the Phæacians, of which my father, Alcinous, is king."

Then calling her attendants, who had dispersed on the first sight of Ulysses, she rebuked them for their fear, and said: "This man is no Cyclop, nor monster of sea or land, that you should fear him; but he seems manly, staid, and discreet, and though decayed in his

outward appearance, yet he has the mind's riches, wit and fortitude, in abundance. Show him the cisterns, where he may wash him from the sea-weeds and foam that hang about him, and let him have garments that fit him out of those which we have brought with us to the cisterns."

Ulysses, retiring a little out of sight, cleansed him in the cisterns from the soil and impurities with which the rocks and waves had covered all his body; and, clothing himself with befitting raiment, which the princess's attendants had given him, he presented himself in more worthy shape to Nausicaa. She admired to see what a comely personage he was, now he was dressed in all parts; she thought him some king or hero: and secretly wished that the gods would be pleased to give her such a husband.

Then causing her attendants to yoke her mules, and lay up the vestments, which the sun's heat had sufficiently dried, in the coach, she ascended with her maids, and drove off to the palace; bidding Ulysses, as she departed, keep an eye upon the coach, and to follow it on foot at some distance: which she did, because if she had suffered him to have ridden in the coach with her, it might have subjected her to some misconstructions of the common people, who are always ready to vilify and censure their betters, and to suspect that charity is not always pure charity, but that love or some sinister intention lies hid under its disguise. So discreet and attentive to appearance in all her actions was this admirable princess.

Ulysses, as he entered the city, wondered to see its

magnificence, its markets, buildings, temples; its walls and rampires, its trade, and resort of men; its harbors for shipping, which is the strength of the Phæacian state. But when he approached the palace, and beheld its riches, the proportion of its architecture, its avenues, gardens, statues, fountains, he stood rapt in admiration, and almost forgot his own condition in surveying the flourishing estate of others: but recollecting himself, he passed on boldly into the inner apartment, where the king and queen were sitting at dinner with their peers, Nausicaa having prepared them for his approach.

To them humbly kneeling, he made it his request that, since fortune had cast him naked upon their shores, they would take him into their protection, and grant him a conveyance by one of the ships of which their great Phæacian state had such good store, to carry him to his own country. Having delivered his request, to grace it with more humility he went and sat himself down upon the hearth among the ashes, as the custom was in those days when any would make a petition to the throne.

He seemed a petitioner of so great state and of so superior a deportment that Alcinous himself arose to do him honor, and causing him to leave that abject station which he had assumed, placed him next to his throne, upon a chair of state, and thus he spake to his peers:

"Lords and councillors of Phæacia, ye see this man, who he is we know not, that is come to us in the guise of a petitioner: he seems no mean one; but whoever he is, it is fit, since the gods have cast him upon our protec-

tion, that we grant him the rites of hospitality while he stays with us; and at his departure a ship well manned to convey so worthy a personage as he seems to be, in a manner suitable to his rank, to his own country."

This counsel the peers with one consent approved; and wine and meat being set before Ulysses, he ate and drank, and gave the gods thanks who had stirred up the royal bounty of Alcinous to aid him in that extremity. But not as yet did he reveal to the king and queen who he was, or whence he had come; only in brief terms he related his being cast upon their shores, his sleep in the woods, and his meeting with the Princess Nausicaa, whose generosity, mingled with discretion, filled her parents with delight, as Ulysses in eloquent phrases adorned and commended their virtues. But Alcinous, humanely considering that, in consequence of the troubles which his guest had undergone, he required rest, as well as refreshment by food, dismissed him early in the evening to his chamber; where in a magnificent apartment Ulysses found a smoother bed, but not a sounder repose, than he had enjoyed the night before, sleeping upon leaves which he had scraped together in his necessity.

Chapter VII

The Songs of Demodocus—The Convoy Home—The Mariners Transformed to Stone—The Young Shepherd

When it was daylight, Alcinous caused it to be proclaimed by the heralds about the town that there was

come to the palace a stranger, shipwrecked on their coast, that in mien and person resembled a god; and he invited all the chief people of the city to come and do honor to the stranger.

The palace was quickly filled with guests, old and young, for whose cheer, and to grace Ulysses more, Alcinous made a kingly feast, with banquetings and music. Then, Ulysses being seated at a table next the king and queen, in all men's view, after they had feasted Alcinous ordered Demodocus, the court-singer, to be called to sing some song of the deeds of heroes, to charm the ear of his guest. Demodocus came and reached his harp, where it hung between two pillars of silver; and then the blind singer, to whom, in recompense of his lost sight, the Muses had given an inward discernment, a soul and a voice to excite the hearts of men and gods to delight, began in grave and solemn strains to sing the glories of men highliest famed. He chose a poem whose subject was the stern strife stirred up between Ulysses and great Achilles, as at a banquet sacred to the gods, in dreadful language, they expressed their difference; while Agamemnon sat rejoiced in soul to hear those Grecians jar; for the oracle in Pytho had told him that the period of their wars in Troy should then be, when the kings of Greece, anxious to arrive at the wished conclusion, should fall to strife, and contend which must end the war, force or stratagem.

This brave contention he expressed so to the life, in the very words which they both used in the quarrel, as

brought tears into the eyes of Ulysses at the remembrance of past passages of his life; and he held his large purple weed before his face to conceal it. Then craving a cup of wine, he poured it out in secret libation to the gods, who had put into the mind of Demodocus unknowingly to do him so much honor. But when the moving poet began to tell of other occurrences where Ulysses had been present, the memory of his brave followers who had been with him in all difficulties, now swallowed up and lost in the ocean, and of those kings that had fought with him at Troy, some of whom were dead, some exiles like himself, forced itself so strongly upon his mind that, forgetful where he was, he sobbed outright with passion; which yet he restrained, but not so cunningly but Alcinous perceived it, and without taking notice of it to Ulysses, privately gave signs that Demodocus should cease from his singing.

Next followed dancing in the Phæacian fashion, when they would show respect to their guests; which was succeeded by trials of skill, games of strength, running, racing, hurling of the quoit, mock fights, hurling of the javelin, shooting with the bow: in some of which Ulysses modestly challenging his entertainers, performed such feats of strength and prowess as gave the admiring Phæacians fresh reason to imagine that he was either some god, or hero of the race of the gods.

These solemn shows and pageants in honor of his guest King Alcinous continued for the space of many days, as if he could never be weary of showing courtesies to so

worthy a stranger. In all this time he never asked him his name, nor sought to know more of him than he of his own accord disclosed; till on a day as they were seated feasting, after the feast was ended, Demodocus being called, as was the custom, to sing some grave matter, sang how Ulysses, on that night when Troy was fired, made dreadful proof of his valor, maintaining singly a combat against the whole household of Deiphobus; to which the divine expresser gave both act and passion, and breathed such a fire into Ulysses's deeds, that it inspired old death with life in the lively expressing of slaughters, and rendered life so sweet and passionate in the hearers that all who heard felt it fleet from them in the narration: which made Ulysses even pity his own slaughterous deeds, and feel touches of remorse, to see how song can revive a dead man from the grave, yet no way can it defend a living man from death; and in imagination he underwent some part of death's horrors, and felt in his living body a taste of those dying pangs which he had dealt to others, that with the strong conceit, tears (the true interpreters of unutterable emotion) stood in his eyes.

Which King Alcinous noting, and that this was now the second time that he had perceived him to be moved at the mention of events touching the Trojan wars, he took occasion to ask whether his guest had lost any friend or kinsman at Troy, that Demodocus's singing had brought into his mind. Then Ulysses, drying the tears with his cloak, and observing that the eyes of all the company were upon him, desirous to give them satisfac-

tion in what he could, and thinking this a fit time to reveal his true name and destination, spake as follows:

"The courtesies which ye all have shown me, and in particular yourself and princely daughter, O King Alcinous, demand from me that I should no longer keep you in ignorance of what or who I am; for to reserve any secret from you, who have with such openness of friendship embraced my love, would argue either a pusillanimous or an ungrateful mind in me. Know, then, that I am that Ulysses, of whom I perceive ye have heard something; who heretofore have filled the world with the renown of my policies. I am he by whose counsels, if Fame is to be believed at all, more than by the united valor of all the Grecians, Troy fell. I am that unhappy man whom the heavens and angry gods have conspired to keep an exile on the seas, wandering to seek my home, which still flies from me. The land which I am in quest of is Ithaca; in whose ports some ship belonging to your navigation-famed Phæacian state may haply at some time have found a refuge from tempests. If ever you have experienced such kindness, requite it now, by granting to me, who am the king of that land, a passport to that land."

Admiration seized all the court of Alcinous to behold in their presence one of the number of those heroes who fought at Troy, whose divine story had been made known to them by songs and poems, but of the truth they had little known, or rather they had hitherto accounted those heroic exploits as fictions and exaggerations of poets;

but having seen and made proof of the real Ulysses, they began to take those supposed inventions to be real verities, and the tale of Troy to be as true as it was delightful.

Then King Alcinous made answer: "Thrice fortunate ought we to esteem our lot in having seen and conversed with a man of whom report hath spoken so loudly, but, as it seems, nothing beyond the truth. Though we could desire no felicity greater than to have you always among us, renowned Ulysses, yet your desire having been expressed so often and so deeply to return home, we can deny you nothing, though to our own loss. Our kingdom of Phæacia, as you know, is chiefly rich in shipping. In all parts of the world, where there are navigable seas, or ships can pass, our vessels will be found. You cannot name a coast to which they do not resort. Every rock and every quicksand is known to them that lurks in the vast deep. They pass a bird in flight; and with such unerring certainty they make to their destination that some have said that they have no need of pilot or rudder, but that they move instinctively, self-directed, and know the minds of their voyagers. Thus much, that you may not fear to trust yourself in one of our Phæacian ships. To-morrow, if you please, you shall launch forth. To-day spend with us in feasting, who never can do enough when the gods send such visitors."

Ulysses acknowledged King Alcinous's bounty; and while these two royal personages stood interchanging

courteous expressions, the heart of the Princess Nausicaa was overcome: she had been gazing attentively upon her father's guest as he delivered his speech; but when he came to that part where he declared himself to be Ulysses, she blessed herself and her fortune that in relieving a poor shipwrecked mariner, as he seemed no better, she had conferred a kindness on so divine a hero as he proved; and scarce waiting till her father had done speaking, with a cheerful countenance she addressed Ulysses, bidding him be cheerful, and when he returned home, as by her father's means she trusted he would shortly, sometimes to remember to whom he owed his life, and who met him in the woods by the river Callirhoë.

"Fair flower of Phæacia," he replied, "so may all the gods bless me with the strife of joys in that desired day, whenever I shall see it, as I shall always acknowledge to be indebted to your fair hand for the gift of life which I enjoy, and all the blessings which shall follow upon my home-return. The gods give thee, Nausicaa, a princely husband; and from you two spring blessings to this state." So prayed Ulysses, his heart overflowing with admiration and grateful recollections of King Alcinous's daughter.

Then at the king's request he gave them a brief relation of all the adventures that had befallen him since he launched forth from Troy; during which the Princess Nausicaa took great delight (as ladies are commonly taken with these kind of travellers' stories) to hear of the

monster Polyphemus, of the men that devour eacl
in Læstrygonia, of the enchantress Circe, of Scyl
the rest; to which she listened with a breathless
tion, letting fall a shower of tears from her fair eyes
now and then, when Ulysses told of some mor
usual distressful passage in his travels; and all t
of his auditors, if they had before entertained a h
spect for their guest, now felt their veneration inc
tenfold, when they learned from his own mouth
perils, what sufferance, what endurance, of evils h
man's strength to support, this much-sustaining,
heavenly man, by the greatness of his mind and
invincible courage, had struggled through.

The night was far spent before Ulysses had
his narrative, and with wishful glances he cast hi
toward the eastern parts, which the sun had be
flecker with his first red; for on the morrow Al
had promised that a bark should be in readiness t
voy him to Ithaca.

In the morning a vessel well manned and app
was waiting for him; into which the king and
heaped presents of gold and silver, massy plate, a
armor, and whatsoever things of cost or rarity they
would be most acceptable to their guest; and th
being set, Ulysses, embarking with expressions of
took his leave of his royal entertainers, of the fair p
(who had been his first friend), and of the pe
Phæacia; who, crowding down to the beach to ha
last sight of their illustrious visitant, beheld the

ship with all her canvas spread, bounding and curvetting over the waves, like a horse proud of his rider, or as if she knew that in her rich freightage she bore Ulysses.

He whose life past had been a series of disquiets, in seas among rude waves, in battles among ruder foes, now slept securely, forgetting all; his eyelids bound in such deep sleep as only yielded to death; and when they reached the nearest Ithacan port by the next morning, he was still asleep. The mariners, not willing to awake him, landed him softly, and laid him in a cave at the foot of an olive tree, which made a shady recess in that narrow harbor, the haunt of almost none but the sea nymphs, which are called Naiads; few ships before this Phæacian vessel having put into that haven, by reason of the difficulty and narrowness of the entrance. Here leaving him asleep, and disposing in safe places near him the presents with which King Alcinous had dismissed him, they departed for Phæacia, where these wretched mariners never again set foot; but just as they arrived, and thought to salute their country earth, in sight of their city's turrets, and in open view of their friends who from the harbor with shouts greeted their return, their vessel and all the mariners which were in her were turned to stone, and stood transformed and fixed in sight of the whole Phæacian city, where it yet stands, by Neptune's vindictive wrath; who resented thus highly the contempt which those Phæacians had shown in convoying home a man whom the god had destined to destruction. Whence it comes to pass that the Phæacians at this day will at no

price be induced to lend their ships to strangers, or to become the carriers for other nations, so highly do they still dread the displeasure of the sea-god, while they see that terrible monument ever in sight.

When Ulysses awoke, which was not till some time after the mariners had departed, he did not at first know his country again, either that long absence had made it strange, or that Athené (which was more likely) had cast a cloud about his eyes, that he should have greater pleasure hereafter in discovering his mistake; but like a man suddenly awaking in some desert isle, to which his sea-mates have transported him in his sleep, he looked around, and discerning no known objects, he cast his hands to heaven for pity, and complained on those ruthless men who had beguiled him with a promise of conveying him home to his country, and perfidiously left him to perish in an unknown land. But then the rich presents of gold and silver given him by Alcinous, which he saw carefully laid up in secure places near him, staggered him: which seemed not like the act of wrongful or unjust men, such as turn pirates for gain, or land helpless passengers in remote coasts to possess themselves of their goods.

While he remained in this suspense, there came up to him a young shepherd, clad in the finer sort of apparel, such as kings' sons wore in those days when princes did not disdain to tend sheep; who, accosting him, was saluted again by Ulysses, who asked him what country that was on which he had been just landed, and whether

it were part of a continent, or an island. The young shepherd made show of wonder to hear any one ask the name of that land; as country people are apt to esteem those for mainly ignorant and barbarous who do not know the names of places which are familiar to them, though perhaps they who ask have had no opportunities of knowing, and may have come from far countries.

"I had thought," said he, "that all people knew our land. It is rocky and barren, to be sure; but well enough: it feeds a goat or an ox well; it is not wanting either in wine or in wheat; it has good springs of water, some fair rivers; and wood enough, as you may see: it is called Ithaca."

Ulysses was joyed enough to find himself in his own country; but so prudently he carried his joy, that, dissembling his true name and quality, he pretended to the shepherd that he was only some foreigner who by stress of weather had put into that port; and framed on the sudden a story to make it plausible, how he had come from Crete in a ship of Phæacia; when the young shepherd, laughing, and taking Ulysses's hand in both his, said to him: "He must be cunning, I find, who thinks to overreach you. What, cannot you quit your wiles and your subtleties, now that you are in a state of security? must the first word with which you salute your native earth be an untruth? and think you that you are unknown?"

Ulysses looked again; and he saw, not a shepherd, but a beautiful woman, whom he immediately knew to

be the goddess Athené, that in the wars of Troy had frequently vouchsafed her sight to him; and had been with him since in perils, saving him unseen.

"Let not my ignorance offend thee, great Athené," he cried, "or move thy displeasure, that in that shape I knew thee not; since the skill of discerning deities is not attainable by wit or study, but hard to be hit by the wisest of mortals. To know thee truly through all thy changes is only given to those whom thou art pleased to grace. To all men thou takest all likenesses. All men in their wits think that they know thee, and that they have thee. Thou art Wisdom itself. But a semblance of thee, which is false wisdom, often is taken for thee; so thy counterfeit view appears to many, but thy true

in his own country; and with the delight which he felt, he could not forbear stooping down and kissing the soil.

Chapter VIII

The Change from a King to a Beggar—Eumæus and the Herdsmen—Telemachus

Not long did Athené suffer him to indulge vain transports; but briefly recounting to him the events which had taken place in Ithaca during his absence, she showed him that his way to his wife and throne did not lie so open, but that before he were reinstated in the secure possession of them he must encounter many difficulties. His palace, wanting its king, was become the resort of insolent and imperious men, the chief nobility of Ithaca and of the neighboring isles, who, in the confidence of Ulysses being dead, came as suitors to Penelope. The queen (it was true) continued single, but was little better than a state-prisoner in the power of these men, who, under a pretence of waiting her decision, occupied the king's house rather as owners than guests, lording and domineering at their pleasure, profaning the palace and wasting the royal substance with their feasts and mad riots. Moreover, the goddess told him how, fearing the attempts of these lawless men upon the person of his young son Telemachus, she herself had put it into the heart of the prince to go and seek his father in far countries; how in the shape of Mentor she had borne

him company in his long search; which, though failing, as she meant it should fail, in its first object, had yet had this effect, that through hardships he had learned endurance, through experience he had gathered wisdom, and wherever his footsteps had been he had left such memorials of his worth, that the fame of Ulysses's son was already blown throughout the world; that it was now not many days since Telemachus had arrived in the island, to the great joy of the queen his mother, who had thought him dead, by reason of his long absence, and had begun to mourn for him with a grief equal to that which she endured for Ulysses: the goddess herself having so ordered the course of his adventures that the time of his return should correspond with the return of Ulysses, that they might together concert measures how to repress the power

revolved in his mind how that his enemies were a multitude, and he single, he began to despond, and he said, "I shall die an ill death like Agamemnon; in the threshhold of my own house I shall perish, like that unfortunate monarch, slain by some one of my wife's suitors." But then again calling to mind his ancient courage, he secretly wished that Athené would but breathe such a spirit into his bosom as she had inflamed him with in the hour of Troy's destruction, that he might encounter with three hundred of those impudent suitors at once, and strew the pavements of his beautiful palace with their bodies.

And Athené knew his thoughts, and she said, "I will be strongly with thee, if thou fail not to do thy part. And for a sign between us that I will perform my promise, and for a token on thy part of obedience, I must change thee, that thy person may not be known of men."

Then Ulysses bowed his head to receive the divine impression, and Athené by her great power changed his person so that it might not be known. She changed him to appearance into a very old man, yet such a one as by his limbs and gait seemed to have been some considerable person in his time, and to retain yet some remains of his once prodigious strength. Also, instead of those rich robes in which king Alcinous had clothed him, she threw over his limbs such old and tattered rags as wandering beggars usually wear. A staff supported his steps, and a scrip hung to his back, such as travelling mendicants use to hold the scraps which are given to them at rich men's

doors. So from a king he became a beggar, as wise Tiresias had predicted to him in the shades.

To complete his humiliation, and to prove his obedience by suffering, she next directed him in this beggarly attire to go and present himself to his old herdsman, Eumæus, who had the care of his swine and his cattle, and had been a faithful steward to him all the time of his absence. Then strictly charging Ulysses that he should reveal himself to no man but to his own son, whom she would send to him when she saw occasion, the goddess went her way.

The transformed Ulysses bent his course to the cottage of the herdsman; and, entering in at the front court, the dogs, of which Eumæus kept many fierce ones for the protection of the cattle, flew with open mouths upon him, as those ignoble animals have often-times an antipathy to the sights of anything like a beggar, and would have rent him in pieces with their teeth, if Ulysses had not had the prudence to let fall his staff, which had chiefly provoked their fury, and sat himself down in a careless fashion upon the ground; but for all that some serious hurt had certainly been done to him, so raging the dogs were, had not the herdsman, whom the barking of the dogs had fetched out of the house, with shouting and with throwing of stones repressed them.

He said, when he saw Ulysses, "Old father, how near you were to being torn in pieces by these rude dogs! I should never have forgiven myself, if through neglect of mine any hurt had happened to you. But heaven

has given me so many cares to my portion that I might well be excused for not attending to everything: while here I lie grieving and mourning for the absence of that majesty which once ruled here, and am forced to fatten his swine and his cattle for food to evil men, who hate him and who wish his death; when he perhaps strays up and down the world, and has not wherewith to appease hunger, if indeed he yet lives (which is a question) and enjoys the cheerful light of the sun." This he said, little thinking that he of whom he spoke now stood before him, and that in that uncouth disguise and beggarly obscurity was present the hidden majesty of Ulysses.

Then he had his guest into the house, and set meat and drink before him; and Ulysses said, "May Jove and all the other gods requite you for the kind speeches and hospitable usage which you have shown me!"

Eumæus made answer, "My poor guest, if one in much worse plight than yourself had arrived here, it were a shame to such scanty means as I have, if I had let him depart without entertaining him to the best of my ability. Poor men, and such as have no houses of their own, are by Jove himself recommended to our care. But the cheer which we that are servants to other men have to bestow is but sorry at most, yet freely and lovingly I give it you. Indeed, there once ruled here a man, whose return the gods have set their faces against, who, if he had been suffered to reign in peace and grow old among us, would have been kind to me and mine. But he is gone; and for his sake would to God that the whole

osterity of Helen might perish with her, since in her uarrel so many worthies have perished! But such as our fare is, eat it, and be welcome—such lean beasts are food for poor herdsmen. The fattest go to feed he voracious stomachs of the queen's suitors. Shame n their unworthiness! There is no day in which two or hree of the noblest of the herd are not slain to support heir feasts and their surfeits."

Ulysses gave good ear to his words; and as he ate is meat, he even tore it and rent it with his teeth, for here vexation that his fat cattle should be slain to glut he appetites of those godless suitors. And he said, What chief or what ruler is this that thou commendest o highly, and sayest that he perished at Troy? I am ut a stranger in these parts. It may be I have heard

fish at sea has devoured him, or he lieth with no better monument upon his bones than the sea-sand. But for me past all the race of men were tears created; for I never shall find so kind a royal master more; not if my father or my mother could come again and visit me from the tomb, would my eyes be so blessed, as they should be with the sight of him again, coming as from the dead. In his last rest my soul shall love him. He is not here, nor do I name him as a flatterer, but because I am thankful for his love and care which he had to me a poor man; and if I knew surely that he were past all shores that the sun shines upon, I would invoke him as a deified thing."

For this saying of Eumæus the waters stood in Ulysses's eyes, and he said, "My friend, to say and to affirm positively that he cannot be alive is to give too much license to incredulity. For, not to speak at random, but with as much solemnity as an oath comes to, I say to you that Ulysses shall return; and whenever that day shall be, then shall you give to me a cloak and a coat; but till then, I will not receive so much as a thread of a garment, but rather go naked; for no less than the gates of hell do I hate that man whom poverty can force to tell an untruth. Be Jove then witness to my words, that this very year, nay, ere this month be fully ended, your eyes shall behold Ulysses, dealing vengeance in his own palace upon the wrongers of his wife and his son."

To give the better credence to his words, he amused

Eumæus with a forged story of his life; feigning of himself that he was a Cretan born, and one that went with Idomeneus to the wars of Troy. Also he said that he knew Ulysses, and related various passages which he alleged to have happened betwixt Ulysses and himself; which were either true in the main, as having really happened between Ulysses and some other person, or were so like to truth, as corresponding with the known character and actions of Ulysses, that Eumæus's incredulity was not a little shaken. Among other things, he asserted that he had lately been entertained in the court of Thesprotia, where the king's son of the country had told him that Ulysses had been there but just before him, and was gone upon a voyage to the oracle of Jove in Dodona, whence he should shortly return, and a ship

and drunken, and was refreshed with the herdsman's good cheer, was resolved to try whether his host's hospitality would extend to the lending him a good warm mantle or rug to cover him in the night season; and framing an artful tale for the purpose, in a merry mood, filling a cup of Greek wine, he thus began:

"I will tell you a story of your King Ulysses and myself. If there is ever a time when a man may have leave to tell his own stories, it is when he has drunken too much. Strong liquor driveth the fool, and moves even the heart of the wise, moves and impels him to sing and to dance, and break forth in pleasant laughters, and perchance to prefer a speech too which were better kept in. When the heart is open, the tongue will be stirring. But you shall hear. We led our powers to ambush once under the walls of Troy."

The herdsmen crowded about him eager to hear anything which related to their King Ulysses and the wars of Troy, and thus he went on:

"I remember, Ulysses and Menelaus had the direction of that enterprise, and they were pleased to join me with them in the command. I was at that time in some repute among men, though fortune has played me a trick since, as you may perceive. But I was somebody in those times, and could do something. Be that as it may, a bitter freezing night it was, such a night as this; the air cut like steel, and the sleet gathered on our shields like crystal. There were some twenty of us, that lay close crouched down among the reeds and bulrushes that grew

in the moat that goes round the city. The rest of us made tolerable shift, for every man had been careful to bring with him a good cloak or mantle to wrap over his armor and keep himself warm; but I, as it chanced, had left my cloak behind me, as not expecting that the night would prove so cold; or rather I believe because I had at that time a brave suit of new armor on, which, being a soldier, and having some of the soldier's vice about me —vanity—I was not willing should be hidden under a cloak; but I paid for my indiscretion with my sufferings, for with the inclement night, and the wet of the ditch in which we lay, I was wellnigh frozen to death; and when I could endure no longer, I jogged Ulysses, who was next to me, and had a nimble ear, and made known my

him, a good warm mantle, to which I succeeded, and by the help of it got through the night with credit. This shift Ulysses made for one in need, and would to heaven that I had now that strength in my limbs which made me in those days to be accounted fit to be a leader under Ulysses! I should not then want the loan of a cloak or a mantle, to wrap about me and shield my old limbs from the night air."

The tale pleased the herdsmen; and Eumæus, who more than all the rest was gratified to hear tales of Ulysses, true or false, said that for his story he deserved a mantle, and a night's lodging, which he should have; and he spread for him a bed of goat and sheep skins by the fire; and the seeming beggar, who was indeed the true Ulysses, lay down and slept under that poor roof, in that abject disguise to which the will of Athené had subjected him.

When morning was come, Ulysses made offer to depart, as if he were not willing to burden his host's hospitality any longer, but said that he would go and try the humanity of the townsfolk, if any there would bestow upon him a bit of bread or a cup of drink. Perhaps the queen's suitors, he said, out of their full feasts, would bestow a scrap on him; for he could wait at table, if need were, and play the nimble serving-man; he could fetch wood, he said, or build a fire, prepare roast meat or boiled, mix the wine with water, or do any of those offices which recommended poor men like him to services in great men's houses.

"Alas! poor guest," said Eumæus, "you know not what you speak. What should so poor and old a man as you do at the suitors' tables? Their light minds are not given to such grave servitors. They must have youths, richly tricked out in flowing vests, with curled hair, like so many of Jove's cup-bearers, to fill out the wine to them as they sit at table, and to shift their trenchers. Their gorged insolence would but despise and make a mock at thy age. Stay here. Perhaps the queen, or Telemachus, hearing of thy arrival, may send to thee of their bounty."

As he spake these words, the steps of one crossing the front court were heard, and a noise of the dogs fawning and leaping about as for joy; by which token Eumæus guessed that it was the prince, who, hearing of a traveller

Eumæus, "and that he has been a soldier and a traveller, but whether he speak the truth or not he alone can tell. But whatsoever he has been, what he is now is apparent. Such as he appears, I give him to you; do what you will with him; his boast at present is that he is at the very best a supplicant."

"Be he what he may," said Telemachus, "I accept him at your hands. But where I should bestow him I know not, seeing that in the palace his age would not exempt him from the scorn and contempt which my mother's suitors in their light minds would be sure to fling upon him: a mercy if he escaped without blows; for they are a company of evil men, whose profession is wrongs and violence."

Ulysses answered: "Since it is free for any man to speak in presence of your greatness, I must say that my heart puts on a wolfish inclination to tear and to devour, hearing your speech, that these suitors should with such injustice rage, where you should have the rule solely. What should the cause be? Do you wilfully give way to their ill manners? Or has your government been such as has procured ill-will toward you from your people? Or do you mistrust your kinsfolk and friends in such sort, as, without trial, to decline their aid? A man's kindred are they that he might trust to when extremities run high."

Telemachus replied, "The kindred of Ulysses are few. I have no brothers to assist me in the strife; but the suitors are powerful in kindred and friends. The

ouse of old Arcesius has had this fate from the heav-
ns, that from old it still has been supplied with single
eirs. To Arcesius, Laertes only was born; from Laer-
es descended only Ulysses; from Ulysses I alone have
prung, whom he left so young that from me never
omfort arose to him. But the end of all rests in the
ands of the gods."

Then Eumæus departing to see some necessary
usiness of his herds, Athené took a woman's shape,
nd stood in the entry of the door, and was seen to
Ulysses, but by his son she was not seen, for the pres-
nces of the gods are invisible save to those to whom
hey will to reveal themselves. Nevertheless, the dogs
hich were about the door saw the goddess, and durst
ot bark but went crouching and licking of the dust

whose absence thy youth has been exposed to such wrongs from injurious men." Then kissed he his son, nor could any longer refrain those tears which he had held under such mighty restraint before, though they would ever be forcing themselves out in spite of him; but now, as if their sluices had burst, they came out like rivers, pouring upon the warm cheeks of his son. Nor yet by all these violent arguments could Telemachus be persuaded to believe that it was his father, but he said some deity had taken that shape to mock him; for he affirmed that it was not in the power of any man, who is sustained by mortal food, to change his shape so in a moment from age to youth: "for but now," said he, "you were all wrinkles, and were old, and now you look as the gods are pictured."

His father replied: "Admire, but fear not, and know me to be at all parts substantially thy father, who in the inner powers of his mind, and the unseen workings of a father's love to thee, answers to his outward shape and pretence! There shall no more Ulysseses come here. I am he that after twenty years' absence, and suffering a world of ill, have recovered at last the sight of my country earth. It was the will of Athené that I should be changed as you saw me. She put me thus together; she puts together or takes to pieces whom she pleases. It is in the law of her free power to do it: sometimes to show her favorites under a cloud, and poor, and again to restore to them their ornaments. The gods raise and throw down men with ease."

Then Telemachus could hold out no longer, but he gave way now to a full belief and persuasion of that which for joy at first he could not credit, that it was indeed his true and very father that stood before him; and they embraced, and mingled their tears.

Then said Ulysses, "Tell me who these suitors are, what are their numbers, and how stands the queen thy mother affected to them?"

"She bears them still in expectation," said Telemachus, "which she never means to fulfil, that she will accept the hand of some one of them in second nuptials; for she fears to displease them by an absolute refusal. So from day to day she lingers them on with hope, which they are content to bear the deferring of, while they have entertainment at free cost in our palace."

crown of Penelope; and all these under one strong roof —a fearful odds against two! My father, there is need of caution, lest the cup which your great mind so thirsts to taste of vengeance prove bitter to yourself in the drinking. And therefore it were well that we should bethink us of some one who might assist us in this undertaking."

"Thinkest thou," said his father, "if we had Athené and the king of skies to be our friends, would their sufficiencies make strong our part; or must we look out for some further aid yet?"

"They you speak of are above the clouds," said Telemachus, "and are sound aids indeed; as powers that not only exceed human, but bear the chiefest sway among the gods themselves."

Then Ulysses gave directions to his son to go and mingle with the suitors, and in nowise to impart his secret to any, not even to the queen his mother, but to hold himself in readiness, and to have his weapons and his good armor in preparation. And he charged him that when he himself should come to the palace, as he meant to follow shortly after, and present himself in his beggar's likeness to the suitors, that whatever he should see which might grieve his heart, with what foul usage and contumelious language soever the suitors should receive his father, coming in that shape, though they should strike and drag him by the heels along the floors, that he should not stir nor make offer to oppose them, further than by mild words to expostulate with them,

until Athené from heaven should give the sign which should be the prelude to their destruction. And Telemachus, promising to obey his instructions, departed; and the shape of Ulysses fell to what it had been before, and he became to all outward appearance a beggar, in base and beggarly attire.

Chapter IX

The Queen's Suitors—The Battle of the Beggars—The Armor Taken Down —The Meeting with Penelope

From the house of Eumæus the seeming beggar took his way, leaning on his staff, till he reached the palace, entering in at the hall where the suitors sat at meat. They in the pride of their feasting began to break their jests in mirthful manner, when they saw one looking so poor and so aged approach. He, who expected no better entertainment, was nothing moved at their behavior; but, as became the character which he had assumed, in a suppliant posture crept by turns to every suitor, and held out his hands for some charity, with such a natural and beggar-resembling grace that he might seem to have practiced begging all his life; yet there was a sort of dignity in his most abject stoopings, that whoever had seen him would have said, "If it had pleased heaven that this poor man had been born a king, he would gracefully have filled a throne." And some pitied him, and some gave him alms, as their present humors inclined them; but the greater part reviled him,

and bade him begone, as one that spoiled their feast; for the presence of misery has this power with it, that, while it stays, it can dash and overturn the mirth even of those who feel no pity or wish to relieve it: Nature bearing this witness of herself in the hearts of the most obdurate.

Now Telemachus sat at meat with the suitors, and knew that it was the king his father who in that shape begged an alms; and when his father came and presented himself before him in turn, as he had done to the suitors one by one, he gave him of his own meat which he had in his dish, and of his own cup to drink. And the suitors were past measure offended to see a pitiful beggar, as they esteemed him, to be so choicely regarded by the prince.

Then Antinous, who was a great lord, and of chief note among the suitors, said, "Prince Telemachus does ill to encourage these wandering beggars, who go from place to place, affirming that they have been some considerable persons in their time, filling the ears of such as hearken to them with lies, and pressing with their bold feet into kings' palaces. This is some saucy vagabond, some travelling Egyptian."

"I see," said Ulysses, "that a poor man should get but little at your board; scarce should he get salt from your hands, if he brought his own meat."

Lord Antinous, indignant to be answered with such sharpness by a supposed beggar, snatched up a stool, with which he smote Ulysses where the neck and shoulders join. This usage moved not Ulysses; but in his

great heart he meditated deep evils to come upon them all, which for a time must be kept close, and he went and sat himself down in the doorway to eat of that which was given him; and he said, "For life or possessions a man will fight, but for his belly this man smites. If a poor man has any god to take his part, my lord Antinous shall not live to be the queen's husband."

Then Antinous raged highly, and threatened to drag him by the heels, and to rend his rags about his ears, if he spoke another word.

But the other suitors did in nowise approve of the harsh language, nor of the blow which Antinous had dealt; and some of them said, "Who knows but one of the deities goes about hid under that poor disguise? for in the likeness of poor pilgrims the gods have many times descended to try the dispositions of men, whether they be humane or impious." While these things passed, Telemachus sat and observed all, but held his peace, remembering the instructions of his father. But secretly he waited for the sign which Athené was to send from heaven.

That day there followed Ulysses to the court one of the common sort of beggars, Irus by name, one that had received alms beforetime of the suitors, and was their ordinary sport, when they were inclined, as that day, to give way to mirth, to see him eat and drink; for he had the appetite of six men, and was of huge stature and proportions of body; yet had in him no spirit nor courage of a man. This man, thinking to curry favor with the

suitors, and recommend himself especially to such a great lord as Antinous was, began to revile and scorn Ulysses, putting foul language upon him, and fairly challenging him to fight with the fist. But Ulysses, deeming his railings to be nothing more than jealousy and that envious disposition which beggars commonly manifest to brothers in their trade, mildly besought him not to trouble him, but to enjoy that portion which the liberality of their entertainers gave him, as he did quietly; seeing that, of their bounty, there was sufficient for all.

But Irus, thinking that this forbearance in Ulysses was nothing more than a sign of fear, so much the more highly stormed, and bellowed, and provoked him to fight; and by this time the quarrel had attracted the notice of the suitors, who with loud laughters and shouting egged on the dispute; and Lord Antinous swore by all the gods it should be a battle, and that in that hall the strife should be determined. To this the rest of the suitors with violent clamors acceded, and a circle was made for the combatants, and a fat goat was proposed as the victor's prize, as at the Olympic or the Pythian games. Then Ulysses, seeing no remedy, or being not unwilling that the suitors should behold some proof of that strength which ere long in their own persons they were to taste of, stripped himself, and prepared for the combat. But first he demanded that he should have fair play shown him; that none in that assembly should aid his opponent, or take part against him, for, being an old man, they might easily crush him with their strengths.

And Telemachus passed his word that no foul play should be shown him, but that each party should be left to their own unassisted strengths, and to this he made Antinous and the rest of the suitors swear.

But when Ulysses had laid aside his garments, and was bare to the waist, all the beholders admired at the goodly sight of his large shoulders, being of such exquisite shape and whiteness, and at his great and brawny bosom, and the youthful strength which seemed to remain in a man thought so old; and they said, "What limbs and what sinews he has!" and coward fear seized on the mind of that vast beggar Irus, and he dropped his threats, and his big words, and would have fled, but Lord Antinous stayed him, and threatened him that if he declined the combat, he would put him in a ship, and land him on the shores where King Echetus reigned, the roughest tyrant which at that time the world contained, and who had that antipathy to rascal beggars, such as he, that when any landed on his coast he would crop their ears and noses and give them to the dogs to tear. So Irus, in whom fear of King Echetus prevailed above the fear of Ulysses, addressed himself to the fight. But Ulysses, provoked to be engaged in so odious a strife with a fellow of his base conditions, and loathing longer to be made a spectacle to entertain the eyes of his foes, with one blow, which he struck him beneath the ear, so shattered the teeth and jawbone of this soon baffled coward that he laid him sprawling in the dust, with small stomach or ability to renew the contest. Then rising him on his feet, he

led him bleeding and sputtering to the door, and put his staff into his hand, and bade him go use his command upon dogs and swine, but not presume himself to be lord of the guests another time, nor of the beggary!

The suitors applauded in their vain minds the issue of the contest, and rioted in mirth at the expense of poor Irus, who they vowed should be forthwith embarked, and sent to king Echetus; and they bestowed thanks on Ulysses for ridding the court of that unsavory morsel, as they called him; but in their inward souls they would not have cared if Irus had been victor, and Ulysses had taken the foil, but it was mirth to them to see the beggars fight. In such pastimes and light entertainments the day wore away.

When evening was come, the suitors betook themselves to music and dancing. And Ulysses leaned his back against a pillar from which certain lamps hung which gave light to the dancers, and he made show of watching the dancers, but very different thoughts were in his head. And as he stood near the lamps, the light fell upon his head, which was thin of hair and bald, as an old man's. And Eurymachus, a suitor, taking occasion from some words which were spoken before, scoffed, and said, "Now I know for a certainty that some god lurks under the poor and beggarly appearance of this man; for, as he stands by the lamps, his sleek head throws beams around it, like as it were a glory." And another said, "He passes his time, too, not much unlike the gods, lazily living exempt from labor, taking offerings of men." "I war-

rant," said Eurymachus again, "he could not raise a fence or dig a ditch for his livelihood, if a man would hire him to work in a garden."

"I wish," said Ulysses, "that you who speak this and myself were to be tried at any taskwork: that I had a good crooked scythe put in my hand, that was sharp and strong, and you such another, where the grass grew longest, to be up by daybreak, mowing the meadows till the sun went down, not tasting of food till we had finished; or that we were set to plow four acres in one day of good glebe land, to see whose furrows were evenest and cleanest; or that we might have one wrestling bout together; or that in our right hands a good steel-headed lance were placed, to try whose blows fell heaviest and thickest upon the adversary's head-piece. I would cause you such work as you should have small reason to reproach me with being slack at work. But you would do well to spare me this reproach, and to save your strength till the owner of this house shall return, till the day when Ulysses shall return, when returning he shall enter upon his birthright."

This was a galling speech to those suitors, to whom Ulysses's return was indeed the thing which they most dreaded; and a sudden fear fell upon their souls, as if they were sensible of the real presence of that man who did indeed stand among them, but not in that form as they might know him; and Eurymachus, incensed, snatched a massy cup which stood on a table near and hurled it at the head of the supposed beggar, and but nar-

rowly missed the hitting of him; and all the suitors rose, as at once, to thrust him out of the hall, which they said his beggarly presence and his rude speeches had profaned. But Telemachus cried to them to forbear, and not to presume to lay hands upon a wretched man to whom he had promised protection. He asked if they were mad, to mix such abhorred uproar with his feasts. He bade them take their food and their wine, to sit up or go to bed at their free pleasures, so long as he should give license to that freedom; but why should they abuse his banquet, or let the words which a poor beggar spake have power to move their spleens so fiercely?

They bit their lips and frowned for anger to be checked so by a youth; nevertheless from that time they had the grace to abstain, either for shame, or that Athené had infused into them a terror of Ulysses's son.

So that day's feast was concluded without bloodshed, and the suitors, tired with their sports, departed severally each man to his apartment. Only Ulysses and Telemachus remained. And now Telemachus, by his father's direction, went and brought down into the hall armor and lances from the armory; for Ulysses said, "On the morrow we shall have need of them." And moreover he said, "If any one shall ask why you have taken them down, say it is to clean them and scour them from the rust which they have gathered since the owner of this house went for Troy." And as Telemachus stood by the armor, the lights were all gone out, and it was pitch dark, and the armor gave out glistening beams as of fire,

and he said to his father, "The pillars of the house are on fire." And his father said, "It is the gods who sit above the stars, and have power to make the night as light as the day." And he took it for a good omen. And Telemachus fell to cleaning and sharpening of the lances.

Now Ulysses had not seen his wife Penelope in all the time since his return; for the queen did not care to mingle with the suitors at their banquets, but, as became one that had been Ulysses's wife, kept much in private, spinning and doing her excellent housewiferies among her maids in the remote apartments of the palace. Only upon solemn days she would come down and show herself to the suitors. And Ulysses was filled with a longing desire to see his wife again, whom for twenty years he had not beheld, and he softly stole through the known passages of his beautiful house, till he came where the maids were lighting the queen through a stately gallery that led to the chamber where she slept. And when the maids saw Ulysses, they said, "It is the beggar who came to the court to-day, about whom all that uproar was stirred up in the hall: what does he here?" But Penelope gave commandment that he should be brought before her, for she said, "It may be that he has travelled, and has heard something concerning Ulysses."

Then was Ulysses right glad to hear himself named by his queen, to find himself in nowise forgotten, nor her great love toward him decayed in all that time that

The Story of Sigurd and Brynhild

"So Sigurd gat him ready and rode with Regin to the heath where Fafnir was wont to go to his watering."

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he had been away. And he stood before his queen, and she knew him not to be Ulysses, but supposed that he had been some poor traveller. And she asked him of what country he was.

He told her (as he had before told Eumæus) that he was a Cretan born, and, however poor and cast down he now seemed, no less a man than brother to Idomeneus, who was grandson to King Minos; and though he now wanted bread, he had once had it in his power to feast Ulysses. Then he feigned how Ulysses, sailing for Troy, was forced by stress of weather to put his fleet in at a port of Crete, where for twelve days he was his guest, and entertained by him with all befitting guest-rites. And he described the very garments which Ulysses had on, by which Penelope knew he had seen her lord.

In this manner Ulysses told his wife many tales of himself, at most but painting, but painting so near to the life that the feeling of that which she took in at her ears became so strong that the kindly tears ran down her fair cheeks, while she thought upon her lord, dead as she thought him, and heavily mourned the loss of him whom she missed, whom she could not find, though in very deed he stood so near her.

Ulysses was moved to see her weep, but he kept his his own eyes dry as iron or horn in their lids, putting a bridle upon his strong passion, that it should not issue to sight.

Then told how he had lately been at the court of Thesprotia, and what he had learned concerning Ulysses

there, in order as he had delivered to Eumæus; and Penelope was wont to believe that there might be a possibility of Ulysses being alive, and she said, "I dreamed a dream this morning. Methought I had twenty household fowl which did eat wheat steeped in water from my hand, and there came suddenly from the clouds a crook-beaked hawk, who soused on them and killed them all, trussing their necks; then took his flight back up to the clouds. And in my dream methought that I wept and made great moan for my fowls, and for the destruction which the hawk had made; and my maids came about me to comfort me. And in the height of my griefs the hawk came back, and lighting upon the beam of my chamber, he said to me in a man's voice, which sounded strangely even in my dream, to hear a hawk to speak: 'Be of good cheer,' he said, 'O daughter of Icarius! for this is no dream which thou hast seen, but that which shall happen to thee indeed. Those household fowl, which thou lamentest so without reason, are the suitors who devour thy substance, even as thou sawest the fowl eat from thy hand; and the hawk is thy husband, who is coming to give death to the suitors.' And I awoke, and went to see to my fowls if they were alive, whom I found eating wheat from their troughs, all well and safe as before my dream."

Then said Ulysses, "This dream can endure no other interpretation than that which the hawk gave to it, who is your lord, and who is coming quickly to effect all that his words told you."

"Your words," she said, "my old guest, are so sweet that would you sit and please me with your speech, my ears would never let my eyes close their spheres for very joy of your discourse; but none that is merely mortal can live without the death of sleep, so the gods who are without death themselves have ordained it, to keep the memory of our mortality in our minds, while we experience that as much as we live we die every day; in which consideration I will ascend my bed, which I have nightly watered with my tears since he that was my joy departed for that bad city"—she so speaking because she could not bring her lips to name the name of Troy so much hated. So for that night they parted, Penelope to her bed and Ulysses to his son, and to the armor and the lances in the hall, where they sat up all night cleaning and watching by the armor.

Chapter X

The Madness from Above—The Bow of Ulysses—The Slaughter—The Conclusion

When daylight appeared, a tumultuous concourse of the suitors again filled the hall; and some wondered, and some inquired what meant that glittering store of armor and lances which lay in heaps by the entry of the door; and to all that asked Telemachus made reply that he had caused them to be taken down to cleanse them of the rust and of the stain which they had contracted by lying so long unused, even ever since his father went for Troy;

and with that answer their minds were easily satisfied. So to their feasting and vain rioting again they fell. Ulysses, by Telemachus's order, had a seat and a mess assigned him in the doorway, and he had his eye ever on the lances. And it moved gall in some of the great ones there present to have their feast still dulled with the society of that wretched beggar, as they deemed him; and they reviled and spurned at him with their feet. Only there was one Philætius, who had something of a better nature than the rest, that spake kindly to him, and had his age in respect. He, coming up to Ulysses, took him by the hand with a kind of fear, as if touched exceedingly with imagination of his great worth, and said thus to him: "Hail, father stranger! my brows have sweat to see the injuries which you have received; and my eyes have broke forth in tears when I have only thought, that, such being often-times the lot of worthiest men, to this plight Ulysses may be reduced, and that he now may wander from place to place as you do: for such, who are compelled by need to range here and there, and have no firm home to fix their feet upon, God keeps them in this earth, as under water; so are they kept down and depressed. And a dark thread is sometimes spun in the fates of kings."

At this bare likening of the beggar to Ulysses, Athené from heaven made the suitors for foolish joy to go mad, and roused them to such a laughter as would never stop: they laughed without power of ceasing; their eyes stood full of tears for violent joys. But fears and horrible

misgivings succeeded; and one among them stood up and prophesied: "Ah, wretches!" he said, "what madness from heaven has seized you, that you can laugh? see you not that your meat drops blood? a night, like the night of death, wraps you about; you shriek without knowing it; your eyes thrust forth tears; the fixed walls, and the beam that bears the whole house up, fall blood; ghosts choke up the entry; full is the hall with apparitions of murdered men; under your feet is hell; the sun falls from heaven, and it is midnight at noon." But, like men whom the gods had infatuated to their destruction, they mocked at his fears; and Eurymachus said, "This man is surely mad: conduct him forth into the market-place; set him in the light; for he dreams that 'tis night within the house."

But Theoclymenus (for that was the prophet's name), whom Athené had graced with a prophetic spirit, that he, foreseeing, might avoid the destruction which awaited them, answered, and said, "Eurymachus, I will not require a guide of thee: for I have eyes and ears, the use of both my feet, and a sane mind within me; and with these I will go forth of the doors, because I know the imminent evils which await all you that stay, by reason of this poor guest who is a favorite with all the gods." So saying, he turned his back upon those inhospitable men, and went away home, and never returned to the palace.

These words which he spoke were not unheard by Telemachus, who kept still his eye upon his father, ex-

pecting fervently when he would give the sign which was to precede the slaughter of the suitors.

They, dreaming of no such thing, fell sweetly to their dinner, as joying in the great store of banquet which was heaped in full tables about them; but there reigned not a bitterer banquet planet in all heaven than that which hung over them this day by secret destination of Athené.

There was a bow which Ulysses left when he went for Troy. It had lain by since that time, out of use and unstrung, for no man had strength to draw that bow, save Ulysses. So it had remained, as a monument of the great strength of its master. This bow, with the quiver of arrows belonging thereto, Telemachus had brought down from the armory on the last night along with the lances; and now Athené, intending to do Ulysses an honor, put it into the mind of Telemachus to propose to the suitors to try who was strongest to draw that bow; and he promised that to the man who should be able to draw that bow his mother should be given in marriage—Ulysses's wife the prize to him who should bend the bow of Ulysses.

There was great strife and emulation stirred up among the suitors at those words of the prince Telemachus. And to grace her son's words, and to confirm the promise which he had made, Penelope came and showed herself that day to the suitors; and Athené made her that she appeared never so comely in their sight as on that day, and they were inflamed with the

beholding of so much beauty, proposed as the price of so great manhood; and they cried out that if all those heroes who sailed to Colchis for the rich purchase of the golden-fleeced ram had seen earth's richer prize, Penelope, they would not have made their voyage, but would have vowed their valors and their lives to her, for she was at all parts faultless.

And she said, "The gods have taken my beauty from me, since my lord went for Troy." But Telemachus willed his mother to depart and not be present at that contest; for he said, "It may be, some rougher strife shall chance oft his than may be expedient for a woman to witness." And she retired, she and her maids, and left the hall.

Then the bow was brought into the midst, and a mark was set up by Prince Telemachus; and Lord Antinous, as the chief among the suitors, had the first offer; and he took the bow, and, fitting an arrow to the string, he strove to bend it, but not with all his might and main could he once draw together the ends of that tough bow; and when he found how vain a thing it was to endeavor to draw Ulysses's bow, he desisted, blushing for shame and for mere anger. Then Eurymachus adventured, but with no better success; but as it had torn the hands of Antinous, so did the bow tear and strain his hands, and marred his delicate fingers, yet could he not once stir the string. Then called he to the attendants to bring fat and unctuous matter, which melting at the fire, he dipped the bow therein, thinking to supple it and make it more

pliable; but not with all the helps of art could he succeed in making it to move. After him Liodes, and Amphinomus, and Polybus, and Eurynomus, and Polyctorides essayed their strength; but not any one of them, or of the rest of those aspiring suitors, had any better luck; yet not the meanest of them there but thought himself well worthy of Ulysses's wife, though to shoot with Ulysses's bow the completest champion among them was by proof found too feeble.

Then Ulysses prayed that he might have leave to try; and immediately a clamor was raised among the suitors, because of his petition, and they scorned and swelled with rage at his presumption, and that a beggar should seek to contend in a game of such noble mastery. But Telemachus ordered that the bow should be given him, and that he should have leave to try, since they had failed; "for," he said, "the bow is mine, to give or to withhold"; and none durst gainsay the prince.

Then Ulysses gave a sign to his son, and he commanded the doors of the hall to be made fast, and all wondered at his words, but none could divine the cause. And Ulysses took the bow in his hands, and before he essayed to bend it, he surveyed it at all parts, to see whether by long lying by, it had contracted any stiffness which hindered the drawing; and as he was busied in the curious surveying of his bow, some of the suitors mocked him, and said, "Past doubt this man is a right cunning archer, and knows his craft well. See how he turns it over and over, and looks into it, as if he could see through

the wood!" And others said, "We wish some one would tell out gold into our laps but for so long a time as he shall be in drawing of that string." But when he had spent some little time in making proof of the bow, and had found it to be in good plight, like as a harper in tuning of his harp draws out a string, with such ease or much more did Ulysses draw to the head the string of his own tough bow, and in letting of it go, it twanged with such a shrill noise as a swallow makes when it sings through the air; which so much amazed the suitors that their colors came and went, and the skies gave out a noise of thunder, which at heart cheered Ulysses, for he knew that now his long labors by the disposal of the fates drew to an end. Then fitted he an arrow to the bow, and drawing it to the head, he sent it right to the mark which the prince had set up. Which done, he said to Telemachus, "You have got no disgrace yet by your guest, for I have struck the mark I shot at, and gave myself no such trouble in teasing the bow with fat and fire as these men did, but have made proof that my strength is not impaired, nor my age so weak and contemptible as these were pleased to think it. But come, the day going down calls us to supper; after which succeed poem and harp, and all delights which use to crown princely banquetings."

So saying, he beckoned to his son, who straight girt his sword to his side, and took one of the lances (of which there lay great store from the armory) in his hand, and armed at all points advanced toward his father.

The upper rags which Ulysses wore fell from his shoulder, and his own kingly likeness returned, when he rushed to the great hall door with bow and quiver full of shafts, which down at his feet he poured, and in bitter words presignified his deadly intent to the suitors. "Thus far," he said, "this contest has been decided harmless: now for us there rests another mark, harder to hit, but which my hands shall essay notwithstanding, if Phœbus, god of archers, be pleased to give me the mastery." With that he let fly a deadly arrow at Antinous, which pierced him in the throat, as he was in the act of lifting a cup of wine to his mouth. Amazement seized the suitors, as their great champion fell dead, and they raged highly against Ulysses, and said that it should prove the dearest shaft which he ever let fly, for he had slain a man whose like breathed not in any part of the kingdom; and they flew to their arms, and would have seized the lances, but Athené struck them with dimness of sight that they went erring up and down the hall, not knowing where to find them. Yet so infatuated were they by the displeasure of heaven that they did not see the imminent peril which impended over them; but every man believed that this accident had happened beside the intention of the doer. Fools! to think by shutting their eyes to evade destiny, or that any other cup remained for them but that which their great Antinous had tasted!

Then Ulysses revealed himself to all in that presence, and that he was the man whom they held to be dead at Troy, whose palace they had usurped, whose wife in his

lifetime they had sought in impious marriage, and that for this reason destruction was come upon them. And he dealt his deadly arrows among them, and there was no avoiding him, nor escaping from his horrid person; and Telemachus by his side plied them thick with those murderous lances from which there was no retreat, till fear itself made them valiant, and danger gave them eyes to understand the peril. Then they which had swords drew them, and some with shields, that could find them, and some with tables and benches snatched up in haste, rose in a mass to overwhelm and crush those two: yet they singly bestirred themselves like men, and defended themselves against that great host; and through tables, shields, and all, right through, the arrows of Ulysses clove, and the irresistible lances of Telemachus; and many lay dead, and all had wounds. And Athené, in the likeness of a bird, sat upon the beam which went across the hall, clapping her wings with a fearful noise: and sometimes the great bird would fly among them, cuffing at the swords and at the lances, and up and down the hall would go, beating her wings, and troubling everything, that it was frightful to behold; and it frayed the blood from the cheeks of those heaven-hated suitors. But to Ulysses and his son she appeared in her own divine similitude, with her snake-fringed shield, a goddess armed, fighting their battles. Nor did that dreadful pair desist till they had laid all their foes at their feet. At their feet they lay in shoals: like fishes when the fishermen break up their nets, so they lay gasping and

sprawling at the feet of Ulysses and his son. And Ulysses remembered the prediction of Tiresias, which said that he was to perish by his own guests, unless he slew those who knew him not.

Then certain of the queen's household went up, and told Penelope what had happened; and how her lord Ulysses was come home, and had slain the suitors. But she gave no heed to their words, but thought that some frenzy possessed them, or that they mocked her; for it is the property of such extremes of sorrow as she had felt not to believe when any great joy cometh. And she rated and chid them exceedingly for troubling her. But they the more persisted in their asseverations of the truth of what they had affirmed; and some of them had seen the slaughtered bodies of the suitors dragged forth of the hall. And they said, "That poor guest whom you talked with last night was Ulysses." Then she was yet more fully persuaded that they mocked her, and she wept. But they said, "This thing is true which we have told. We sat within, in an inner room in the palace, and the doors of the hall were shut on us, but we heard the cries and the groans of the men that were killed, but saw nothing, till at length your son called to us to come in, and entering we saw Ulysses standing in the midst of the slaughtered." But she, persisting in her unbelief, said that it was some god which had deceived them to think it was the person of Ulysses.

By this time Telemachus and his father had cleansed their hands from the slaughter, and were come to where

the queen was talking with those of her household; and when she saw Ulysses, she stood motionless, and had no power to speak, sudden surprise and joy and fear and many passions so strove within her. Sometimes she was clear that it was her husband that she saw, and sometimes the alteration which twenty years had made in his person (yet that was not much) perplexed her that she knew not what to think, and for joy she could not believe, and yet for joy she would not but believe; and, above all, that sudden change from a beggar to a king troubled her, and wrought uneasy scruples in her mind. But Telemachus, seeing her strangeness, blamed her, and called her an ungentle and tyrannous mother; and said that she showed a too great curiousness of modesty to abstain from embracing his father, and to have doubts of his person, when to all present it was evident that he was the very real and true Ulysses.

Then she mistrusted no longer, but ran and fell upon Ulysses's neck, and said, "Let not my husband be angry, that I held off so long with strange delays; it is the gods, who severing us for so long time, have caused this unseemly distance in me. If Menelaus's wife had used half my caution, she would never have taken so freely to a stranger; and she might have spared us all these plagues which have come upon us through her shameless deed."

These words with which Penelope excused herself wrought more affection in Ulysses than if upon a first sight she had given up herself implicitly to his embraces; and he wept for joy to possess a wife so discreet, so an-

wering to his own staid mind, that had a depth of wit roportioned to his own, and one that held chaste virtue t so high a price. And he thought the possession of uch a one cheaply purchased with the loss of all Circe's elights and Calypso's immortality of joys; and his long abors and his severe sufferings past seemed as nothing, ow they were crowned with the presence of his virtuous nd true wife Penelope. And as sad men at sea, whose hip has gone to pieces nigh shore, swimming for their ves, all drenched in foam and brine, crawl up to some oor patch of land, which they take possession of with as reat a joy as if they had the world given them in fee, ith such delight did this chaste wife cling to her lord estored, and once again clasp a living Ulysses.

So from that time the land had rest from the suitors

HORATIUS

By LORD MACAULAY

Lars Porsena of Clusium
By the Nine Gods he swore
That the great house of Tarquin
Should suffer wrong no more.
By the Nine Gods he swore it,
And named a trysting day,
And bade his messengers ride forth
East and west and south and north,
To summon his array.

East and west and south and north
The messengers ride fast,
And tower and town and cottage
Have heard the trumpet's blast.
Shame on the false Etruscan
Who lingers in his home,
When Porsena of Clusium
Is on the march for Rome.

The horsemen and the footmen
Are pouring in amain
From many a stately market-place;
From many a fruitful plain·

Heroes of Myth and Legend

From many a lonely hamlet,
  Which, hid by beech and pine,
Like an eagle's nest, hangs on the crest
  Of purple Apennine;

From lordly Volaterræ,
  Where scowls the far-famed hold
Piled by the hands of giants
  For godlike kings of old;
From seagirt Populonia,
  Whose sentinels descry
Sardinia's snowy mountain-tops
  Fringing the southern sky;

From the proud mart of Pisa

Horatius

Best of all pools the fowler loves
  The great Volsinian mere.

But now no stroke of woodman
  Is heard by Auser's rill;
No hunter tracks the stag's green path
  Up the Ciminian hill;
Unwatched along Clitumnus
  Grazes the milk-white steer;
Unharmed the waterfowl may dip
  In the Volsinian mere.

The harvests of Arretium,
  This year, old men shall reap,
This year, young boys in Umbro
  Shall plunge the struggling sheep:
And in the vats of Luna,
  This year, the must shall foam
Round the white feet of laughing girls
  Whose sires have marched to Rome.

There be thirty chosen prophets,
  The wisest of the land,
Who alway by Lars Porsena
  Both morn and evening stand:
Evening and morn the Thirty
  Have turned the verses o'er,
Traced from the right on linen white
  By mighty seers of yore.

And with one voice the Thirty
  Have their glad answer given:
"Go forth, go forth, Lars Porsena;
  Go forth, beloved of Heaven:
Go, and return in glory
  To Clusium's royal dome;
And hang round Nurscia's altars
  The golden shields of Rome."

And now hath every city
  Sent up her tale of men:
The foot are fourscore thousand,
  The horse are thousands ten.
Before the gates of Sutrium

Horatius

From all the spacious champaign
To Rome men took their flight.
A mile around the city,
The throng stopped up the ways;
A fearful sight it was to see
Through two long nights and days.

For aged folks on crutches,
And women great with child,
And mothers sobbing over babes
That clung to them and smiled,
And sick men borne in litters
High on the necks of slaves,
And troops of sunburnt husbandmen
With reaping-hooks and staves,

And droves of mules and asses
Laden with skins of wine,
And endless flocks of goats and sheep,
And endless herds of kine,
And endless trains of wagons
That creaked beneath the weight
Of corn-sacks and of household goods,
Choked every roaring gate.

Now, from the rock Tarpeian,
Could the wan burghers spy
The line of blazing villages
Red in the midnight sky.

The Fathers of the City,
They sat all night and day,
For every hour some horseman came
With tidings of dismay

To eastward and to westward
Have spread the Tuscan bands;
Nor house nor fence nor dovecote
In Crustumerium stands.
Verbenna down to Ostia
Hath wasted all the plain;
Astur hath stormed Janiculum,
And the stout guards are slain.

Iwis, in all the Senate

For, since Janiculum is lost,
Naught else can save the town."

Just then a scout came flying,
All wild with haste and fear;
"To arms! to arms! Sir Consul:
Lars Porsena is here."
On the low hills to westward
The Consul fixed his eye,
And saw the swarthy storm of dust
Rise fast along the sky.

And nearer fast and nearer
Doth the red whirlwind come;
And louder still and still more loud,
From underneath that rolling cloud,
Is heard the trumpet's war-note proud,
The trampling, and the hum.
And plainly and more plainly
Now through the gloom appears,
Far to left and far to right,
In broken gleams of dark-blue light,
The long array of helmets bright,
The long array of spears.

And plainly, and more plainly
Above that glimmering line,
Now might ye see the banners
Of twelve fair cities shine;

But the banner of proud Clusium
  Was highest of them all,
The terror of the Umbrian,
  The terror of the Gaul.

And plainly and more plainly
  Now might the burghers know,
By port and vest, by horse and crest,
  Each warlike Lucumo.
There Cilnius of Arretium
  On his fleet roan was seen
And Astur of the fourfold shield,
Girt with the brand none else may wield,
Tolumnius with the belt of gold,
And dark Verbenna from the hold

Horatius

On the house-tops was no woman
  But spat toward him and hissed,
No child but screamed out curses,
  And shook its little fist.

But the Consul's brow was sad,
  And the Consul's speech was low,
And darkly looked he at the wall,
  And darkly at the foe.
"Their van will be upon us
  Before the bridge goes down;
And if they once may win the bridge,
  What hope to save the town?"

Then out spake brave Horatius,
  The Captain of the Gate:
"To every man upon this earth
  Death cometh soon or late.
And how can man die better
  Than facing fearful odds,
For the ashes of his fathers,
  And the temples of his gods,

"And for the tender mother
  Who dandled him to rest,
And for the wife who nurses
  His baby at her breast,
And for the holy maidens
  Who feed the eternal flame,

Will hold the foe in play.
In yon strait path a thousand
May well be stopped by three.
Now who will stand on either hand,
And keep the bridge with me?"

Then out spake Spurius Lartius;
A Ramnian proud was he:
"Lo, I will stand at thy right hand,
And keep the bridge with thee."
And out spake strong Herminius;
Of Titian blood was he:
"I will abide on thy left side,
And keep the bridge with thee."

"Horatius," quoth the Consul,
"As thou sayest, so let it be."
And straight against that great array
Forth went the dauntless Three

Horatius

Then none was for a party;
  Then all were for the state;
Then the great man helped the poor,
  And the poor man loved the great:
Then lands were fairly portioned;
  Then spoils were fairly sold:
The Romans were like brothers
  In the brave days of old.

Now Roman is to Roman
  More hateful than a foe,
And the Tribunes beard the high,
  And the Fathers grind the low.
As we wax hot in faction,
  In battle we wax cold:
Wherefore men fight not as they fought
  In the brave days of old.

Now while the Three were tightening
  Their harness on their backs,
The Consul was the foremost man
  To take in hand an axe:
And Fathers mixed with Commons
  Seized hatchet, bar, and crow,
And smote upon the planks above,
  And loosed the props below.

Meanwhile the Tuscan army,
  Right glorious to behold,

Came flashing back the noonday light,
Rank behind rank, like surges bright
  Of a broad sea of gold.
Four hundred trumpets sounded
  A peal of warlike glee,
As that great host, with measured tread,
And spears advanced, and ensigns spread,
Rolled slowly towards the bridge's head,
  Where stood the dauntless Three.

The Three stood calm and silent,
  And looked upon the foes,
And a great shout of laughter
  From all the vanguard rose;

Horatius

The fortress of Nequinum lowers
O'er the pale waves of Nar.

Stout Lartius hurled down Aunus
Into the stream beneath:
Herminius struck at Seius,
And clove him to the teeth:
At Picus brave Horatius
Darted one fiery thrust;
And the proud Umbrian's gilded arms
Clashed in the bloody dust.

Then Ocnus of Falerii
Rushed on the Roman Three:
And Lausulus of Urgo,
The rover of the sea;
And Aruns of Volsinium,
Who slew the great wild boar,
The great wild boar that had his den
Amidst the reeds of Cosa's fen,
And wasted fields, and slaughtered men,
Along Albinia's shore.

Herminius smote down Aruns:
Lartius laid Ocnus low:
Right to the heart of Lausulus
Horatius sent a blow.
"Lie there," he cried, "fell pirate!
No more, aghast and pale,

From Ostia's walls the crowd shall mark
The track of thy destroying bark.
No more Campania's hinds shall fly
To woods and caverns when they spy
  Thy thrice accursèd sail."

But now no sound of laughter
  Was heard among the foes.
A wild and wrathful clamor
  From all the vanguard rose.
Six spears' lengths from the entrance
  Halted that deep array,
And for a space no man came forth
  To win the narrow way.

But will ye dare to follow,
If Astur clears the way?"

Then, whirling up his broadsword
With both hands to the height,
He rushed against Horatius,
And smote with all his might.
With shield and blade Horatius
Right deftly turned the blow.
The blow, though turned, came yet too nigh;
It missed his helm, but gashed his thigh:
The Tuscans raised a joyful cry
To see the red blood flow.

He reeled, and on Herminius
He leaned one breathing-space;
Then, like a wild-cat mad with wounds,
Sprang right at Astur's face.
Through teeth, and skull, and helmet,
So fierce a thrust he sped,
The good sword stood a handbreadth out
Behind the Tuscan's head.

And the great Lord of Luna
Fell at that deadly stroke,
As falls on Mount Alvernus
A thunder-smitten oak.
Far o'er the crashing forest
The giant arms lie spread;

And the pale augurs, muttering low,
  Gaze on the blasted head.

On Astur's throat Horatius
  Right firmly pressed his heel,
And thrice and four times tugged amain,
  Ere he wrenched out the steel.
"And see," he cried, "the welcome,
  Fair guests, that waits you here!
What noble Lucumo comes next
  To taste our Roman cheer?"

But at his haughty challenge
  A sullen murmur ran,
Mingled of wrath and shame and dread,
  Along that glittering van.
There lacked not men of prowess,
  Nor men of lordly race;
For all Etruria's noblest
  Were round the fatal place.

But all Etruria's noblest
  Felt their hearts sink to see
On the earth the bloody corpses,
  In the path the dauntless Three:
And, from the ghastly entrance
  Where those bold Romans stood,
All shrank, like boys who unaware,
Ranging the woods to start a hare,

Horatius

Come to the mouth of the dark lair
Where, growling low, a fierce old bear
  Lies amidst bones and blood.

Was none who would be foremost
  To lend such dire attack:
But those behind cried "Forward!"
  And those before cried "Back!"
And backward now and forward
  Wavers the deep array;
And on the tossing sea of steel,
To and fro the standards reel;
And the victorious trumpet-peal
  Dies fitfully away.

Yet one man for one moment
  Stood out before the crowd;
Well known was he to all the Three,
  And they gave him greeting loud,
"Now welcome, welcome, Sextus!
  Now welcome to thy home!
Why dost thou stay, and turn away?
  Here lies the road to Rome."

Thrice looked he at the city;
  Thrice looked he at the dead;
And thrice came on in fury,
  And thrice turned back in dread;

And, white with fear and hatred,
  Scowled at the narrow way
Where, wallowing in a pool of blood,
  The bravest Tuscans lay.

But meanwhile axe and lever
  Have manfully been plied;
And now the bridge hangs tottering
  Above the boiling tide.
"Come back, come back, Horatius!
  Loud cried the Fathers all.
"Back, Lartius! back, Herminius!
  Back, ere the ruin fall!"

Back darted Spurius Lartius;
  Herminius darted back:
And, as they passed, beneath their feet
  They felt the timbers crack.
But when they turned their faces,
  And on the further shore
Saw brave Horatius stand alone,
  They would have crossed once more.

But with a crash like thunder
  Fell every loosened beam,
And, like a dam, the mighty wreck
  Lay right athwart the stream;
And a long shout of triumph
  Rose from the walls of Rome,

Horatius

As to the highest turret-tops
  Was splashed the yellow foam.

And, like a horse unbroken
  When first he feels the rein,
The furious river struggled hard,
  And tossed his tawny mane,
And burst the curb, and bounded,
  Rejoicing to be free,
And whirling down, in fierce career,
Battlement, and plank, and pier,
  Rushed headlong to the sea.

Alone stood brave Horatius,
  But constant still in mind;
Thrice thirty thousand foes before,
  And the broad flood behind.
"Down with him!" cried false Sextus,
  With a smile on his pale face.
"Now yield thee," cried Lars Porsena,
  "Now yield thee to our grace."

Round turned he, as not deigning
  Those craven ranks to see;
Naught spake he to Lars Porsena,
  To Sextus naught spake he;
But he saw on Palatinus
  The white porch of his home;

And he spake to the noble river
That rolls by the towers of Rome.

"O Tiber! father Tiber!
To whom the Romans pray,
A Roman's life, a Roman's arms,
Take thou in charge this day!"
So he spake, and speaking sheathed
The good sword by his side,
And with his harness on his back
Plunged headlong in the tide.

No sound of joy or sorrow
Was heard from either bank;

And oft they thought him sinking,
  But still again he rose.

Never, I ween, did swimmer,
  In such an evil case,
Struggle through such a raging flood
  Safe to the landing-place:
But his limbs were borne up bravely
  By the brave heart within,
And our good father Tiber
  Bore bravely up his chin.

"Curse on him!" quoth false Sextus;
  "Will not the villain drown?
But for this stay, ere close of day
  We should have sacked the town!"
"Heaven help him!" quoth Lars Porsena,
  "And bring him safe to shore;
For such a gallant feat of arms
  Was never seen before."

And now he feels the bottom;
  Now on dry earth he stands;
Now round him throng the Fathers
  To press his gory hands;
And now, with shouts and clapping,
  And noise of weeping loud,
He enters through the River-Gate,
  Borne by the joyous crowd.

could plow from morn till nigh
And they made a molten image,
And set it up on high,
And there it stands unto this day
To witness if I lie.

It stands in the Comitium,
Plain for all folk to see;
Horatius in his harness,
Halting upon one knee:
And underneath is written,
In letters all of gold,
How valiantly he kept the bridge
In the brave days of old.

And still his name sounds stirring
Unto the men of Rome,
As the trumpet-blast that cries to them
To charge the Volscian home;
And wives still pray to Juno
For boys with

Horatius

And the long howling of the wolves
  Is heard amidst the snow;
When round the lonely cottage
  Roars loud the tempest's din,
And the good logs of Algidus
  Roar louder yet within;

When the oldest cask is opened,
  And the largest lamp is lit;
When the chestnuts glow in the embers,
  And the kid turns on the spit;
When young and old in circle
  Around the firebrands close;
When the girls are weaving baskets,
  And the lads are shaping bows;

When the goodman mends his armor,
  And trims his helmet's plume;
When the goodwife's shuttle merrily
  Goes flashing through the loom,—
With weeping and with laughter
  Still is the story told,
How well Horatius kept the bridge
  In the brave days of old

BEOWULF

By Sir George W. Cox and Eustace Hinton Jones

SCÉF and Scyld and Beówulf—these were the god-like kings of the Gar-Danes in days of yore.

Upon the sea and alone came Scéf to the land of Scâni. He came in fashion as a babe, floating in an ark upon the waters, and at his head a sheaf of corn. God sent him for the comfort of the people because they had no king. He tore down the foemen's thrones, and gave the people peace and passed away.

in his good ship along the track of the swans, his war weeds and his battle spoils beside him. He gave the people peace, and passed away.

From him came Beówulf the Scylding, glorious and majestic, strong of hand, the beloved chieftain. He gave the people peace, and passed away.

After the days of the godlike kings, the Danes chose Healfdene for their leader. He ruled long and well, and died in a good old age, and Hrothgár his son reigned in his stead. To Hrothgár good fortune and success in war were given, so that he overcame his enemies, and made the Gar-Danes a powerful and wealthy people.

Now, in his prosperity, it came into Hrothgár's mind to build a great mead hall in his chief city; a lordly palace wherein his warriors and counsellors might feast, they and their children forever, and be glad because of the riches which God had given them. Biggest of all palaces was the mead hall of Hrothgár; high arched and fair with pinnacles. He named it Heorot, that men might think of it as the heart and centre of the realm; that, banded together in friendship at one common banquet-table, they might talk of measures for the common good. With a great feast he opened Heorot the palace, with sound of harp and song of Skald, giving gifts of rings and treasure; so that all the people rejoiced and became of one mind, and sware fealty to him. Then Hrothgár's heart was lifted up because of Heorot which he had builded.

But far away in the darkness where dwell the Jötuns and Orks and giants which war against God, there abode

a mighty evil spirit, a Jötun, both terrible and grim, called Grendel, a haunter of the marshes, whose fastnesses were dank and fenny places. Grendel saw the lofty palace reared, and was filled with jealous anger because the people were as one, and because there was no longer any discord among them. At night he came to the mead hall, where slept the nobles and thanes after the feast, forgetful of sorrow and unmindful of harm; he seized upon thirty men and carried them away to his dwelling-place, there to prey upon their carcasses. Bitterly mourned the Gar-Danes for their brothers when awaking in the morning twilight they saw the track of the accursed spirit, and knew that mortal strength availed for naught against their enemy. Next night Grendel came and did the like, and so for twelve years thereafter came he oftentimes and snatched the Danes while they slumbered, and carried them away to slay and tear them, neither for any ransom would he be prevailed upon to make peace. The houses in the land became empty, because of the counsellors and warriors that were swept away to the death-shade of the Ogre of the misty marshes. But like a shepherd for his flock grieved Hrothgár for the desolation of his people. Broken in spirit he sat in the many-colored mead hall, watching among his vassals through the night; but Grendel touched him not. To right and left of him the monster seized strong-hearted men, a helpless prey, but passed Hrothgár by. God set his finger on the king that the Jötun should not harm him. Hrothgár grew

wearied that he was spared while his dear friends were taken; and when men came to him for counsel, he, the wise counsellor, had none to give, but sat in silence, his head bowed in sorrow on his hands. Vainly the people prayed in the tabernacles to their idols that they would send a spirit slayer down to save them.

Away to the westward among the people of the Geáts lived a man, strongest of his race, tall, mighty handed, and clean made. He was a thane, kinsman to Hygelác the Geátish chief, and nobly, born being son of Ecgtheow the Wægmunding, a war prince who wedded with the daughter of Hrethel the Geát. This man heard of Grendel's deeds, of Hrothgár's sorrow, and the sore distress of the Danes, and having sought out fifteen warriors, he entered into a new-pitched ship to seek the war king across the sea. Bird like the vessel's swan-necked prow breasted the white sea-foam till the warriors reached the windy walls of cliff and the steep mountains of the Danish shores. They thanked God because the wave ways had been easy to them; then, sea-wearied, lashed their wide-bosomed ship to an anchorage, donned their war-weeds, and came to Heorot, the gold and jewelled house. Brightly gleamed their armor and merrily sang the ring-iron of their trappings as they marched into the palace; and having leaned their ample shields against the wall, and piled their ashen javelins, steel-headed, in a heap, they came to where sat Hrothgár, old and bald, among his earls. Hrothgár looked upon the Geátish warriors, chief of whom Hygelác's servant, the mighty

son of Ecgtheow, towered tall above the rest, godlike in his shining armor and the dazzling war net of mail woven by the armorer. Seeing him, Hrothgár was ware that the son of Ecgtheow was Beówulf, raised up of God to be a champion against Grendel the evil spirit—Beówulf the mighty-handed one, in the grip of whose fingers was the strength of thirty men. And while wonderingly he gave him welcome, Beówulf spake, "Hail, O King Hrothgár! Alone and at night I have fought with evil beings, both Jötuns and Nicors, and have overcome; and now, to deliver the bright Danes from their peril, have I sailed across the sea to undertake battle with Grendel the Ogre. And since no weapon may avail to wound the flinty-hided fiend, I will lay by my sword and shield, and empty handed go to meet him. I will grapple with him, strength against strength, till God shall doom whether of us two Death taketh. If I be bereft of life, send back to Hygelác the war shroud which Wayland forged to guard my breast, but make no corpse feast for me: bury my body, and mark its resting-place, but let the passer-by eat without mourning; fate goeth ever as it must."

Hrothgár answered, "Well know I, O my friend Beówulf, of your bravery and the might that dwelleth in your fingers! But very terrible is Grendel. Full oft my hardy warriors, fierce over the ale cup at night, have promised to await the Ogre with the terror of their swords and dare his wrath; but as oft at morningtide the benched floor of the palace has reeked with their blood. But since your mind is valiant, sit down with us

to our evening feast, where by old custom we incite each other to a brave and careless mind before night set in, and Grendel come to choose his prey."

Then were the benches cleared, and Beówulf and the Geáts sate in the mead hall at the banquet with the Danes. Freely flowed the bright sweet liquor from the twisted ale cup borne by the cup-bearer in his office, while the Skald sang of old deeds of valor.

Then said Beówulf, "Full many a man of you hath Grendel made to sleep the sleep of the sword, and now he looketh for no battle from your hands. But I, a Geát, who in the old time have slain strange shapes of horror in the air or deep down underneath the waves, will encounter him, and alone; unarmed, I will guard this mead hall through the night. Alone with the fiend will I await the shining of the morrow's sun on victory, or else sink down into death's darkness fast in the Ogre's grasp." Hrothgár, the old-haired king, took comfort at his steadfast intent, and Wealtheow the Queen, so fair and royally hung with gold, herself bare forth the mead cup to Beówulf, and greeted him with winsome words as champion of her people. Beówulf took the cup from Wealtheow's hand, saying, "No more shall Grendel prey upon the javelin-bearing Danes till he has felt the might of my fingers." Happy were the people at his boldness, and blithe their joy over the well-served hall cup.

Then King Hrothgár would seek his evening rest, for the wan shadows of night were already darkening the welkin. The company arose and greeted man to man,

and Hrothgár greeted Beówulf and said, "O friend, never before did I commit this hall to any man's keeping since I might lift a spear. Have now and hold this best of palaces. Be wakeful and be valorous, and nothing that thou mayest ask shall be too great a prize for victory." So the king departed with his troop of heroes from the mead hall.

Beówulf took off his coat of iron mail, loosed the helmet from his head, and from his thigh the well-chased sword; and having put aside his war gear wholly, stepped upon his bed and laid him down. Around him in the dusk lay many well-armed Danes slumbering from weariness. The darkness fell, and all the keepers of the palace slept save one. Beówulf in a restless mood, naked

Then coming nearer, Grendel laid his hands upon the watchful champion. Suddenly Beówulf raised himself upon his elbow and clutched the Ogre fast; against the shoulder he fastened on the grim Jötun with his hands; and held him. Never before had Grendel met the gripe of hands so strong. He bent himself with all his might against Beówulf and dragged him from his bed, and toward the door; but Beówulf's fingers never slackened from their hold: he drew the Ogre back. Together they struggled upon the hall pavement till the palace rocked and thundered with their battle. Great wonder was it that the palace fell not, but it was made fast with well-forged iron bands within and without; yet many a mead bench overlaid with twisted gold was torn from its place in the furious strife, and the ale spilled on the floor. But Grendel found the clutch of his enemy too strong; he could not loose it with all his wrestlings; and he knew that he must seek to flee away and hide himself in his marsh dwellings. But Beówulf griped him tight; and when the fiend would drag him down the hall he put forth all his strength into his clenched hands. Suddenly the Ogre's shoulder rift from neck to waist. The sinews burst asunder, the joints gave way, and Beówulf tare the shoulder and the shoulder-blade from out his body. So Grendel escaped from Beówulf's grasp and in his mortal sickness fled to the fens. There Death clutched him and he died.

Then in the morning many warriors gathered to the mead hall; and Beówulf brought his trophy, Grendel's

hand and arm and shoulder, and hung it high in the palace that all might see. So hard were the fingers and the stiff nails of the war hand that no well-proven steel would touch them. Hrothgár thanked God and Beówulf for this deliverance, and having made the broken palace strong again with iron bands and hung it round about with tapestry, he held therein a costly feast of rejoicing with his warriors and kinsmen, whereat many a mead-cup was outpoured. To Beówulf he gave rich gifts: a golden ensign and a helm, a breastplate and a sword, each wrought with twisted work of gold, together with eight horses whose housings shone with precious stones. And when the lay of the gleeman was sung and the wine flowed, and the jocund noise from the mead benches rose

rimmed shields at their heads, and lay down to sleep in the mead hall. In their ringed mail shirts they laid them down, ready for war, as was their custom in house and field; ready, if need should befall their lord. Good was the people. So darkness fell in the hall and the Hring-Danes slept, nor wot they that any were fated to die. But at midnight Grendel's mother arose from her dwelling in the cold streams, from her home in the terrible waters, and fiercely grieving for her son's death came and walked the beautiful pavement of Heorot. Greedy of revenge she clutched a noble, very dear to Hrothgár, and tare him in his sleep. Then while the Danes, waking in tumult, were yet smitten with the terror of her presence, she seized from its hanging-place the well-known arm and shoulder of her son, and passed out quickly with the prize. A great cry rose in the mead hall. Beówulf and King Hrothgár heard it, and came hastily to Heorot.

When King Hrothgár knew what had been done, he said, "O Beówulf, my friend; still sorrow for my people bindeth me. Æschere, my councillor and war companion, hath been foully torn to death, nor can we tell whose shall be the next blood with which this new wolf-hearted fiend shall glut herself. Scarce a mile hence is her dwelling-place, a stagnant lake within a darksome grove of hoary-rinded trees whose snaky roots twine all about the margin, shadowing it. A foul black water, whereon fire dwelleth at night, a loathely lake wide-shunned of man and beast. The hunted stag, driven thither, will

ather part from life upon the brink than plunge therein. Darest thou seek this place, to battle with the monster nd deliver us?"

The son of Ecgtheów the Wægmunding answered, Yea, I dare. For to avenge a friend is better than to nourn for him. Neither can a man hasten nor delay is death-hour. Fate waiteth for us all; and he that goeth forth to wreak justice need not trouble about his nd, neither about what shall be in the days when he no onger lives."

Then King Hrothgár gave thanks to the mighty God, and caused a steed with curled hair to be bitted and ed forth for Beówulf. With a troop of shield bearers e accompanied the hero along the narrow path across teep stone cliffs overhung with mountain trees, till they

light. Then Beówulf saw the mighty sea-woman, and furious, swung his heavy sword and brought it down with a crash upon her head. But the keen steel failed him in his need, for her hard skull turned its biting edge. So angrily flinging from him his twisted blade, and trusting wholly to his mighty hand grip, he caught the wolf-woman by the shoulders and bent her backward to the floor. Fiercely she gave back his grappling, and wrestled him till from weariness he rolled and fell; then, drawing her brown-edged knife she sought at one blow to avenge her son. But the hard battle-net upon his breast hindered the entrance of the knife, and God who rules the firmament protected him, so that he gat upon his feet again. Then Beówulf saw hanging in the sea hall a huge sword made by giants, a weapon fortunate in victory, doughty of edge, which none but he could wield. Hard grasped he the war-bill by the hilt, and whirled it savagely against the sea-woman's ring mail in despair of life. Furious he struck, and the bone-rings of her neck gave way before it; so the blade passed through her doomed body, and, war-wearied, her carcass lay lifeless on the floor.

Long time with patience waited Hrothgár and his counsellors, looking into the dark lake where Beówulf went down. Noonday came, and seeing the water stained with blood, they deemed their champion was dead, and sorrowfully gat them home.

But beneath the water was a great marvel. Beówulf cut off the sea-woman's head, but so hot and poisonous

as her blood that the mighty sword which reeked there-
ith melted and burned away, all save the hilt. So it
asted like the ice when the sun loosens the frost chain
nd unwinds the wave ropes. Then Beówulf swam
pward with his heavy burden, the sea-woman's head
nd the sword hilt, and having reached the shore he saw
ne lake dry up. By its hair he carried the woman's
ead, awful and glaring, to the mead hall, and showed
ne wondering Danes the golden sword hilt wrought in
shion as a snake, and marked with Runic characters
herein the history of its forging was set forth. Beówulf
id, " God and my strong hand prospered me and gave
ne victory. Yea, in my strength I have wrested away
ne sword wherewith the giants before the flood defied
ne Eternal God! I have overcome the enemies of God,

flower of his strength and his glory are but for a little while before he leave these poor days and fade away forgotten and another come in his place. But the great Shepherd of the Heavens liveth on, and raiseth up and putteth down whom He will. Dear friend, beware of pride, which groweth up and anon beguileth the heart so fast to sleep that the warrior remembereth not how Death will overpower him at the last. So gloried I, when with spear and sword having freed the Hring-Danes from all their enemies under heaven, I built this mead hall in my pride and reckoned not upon an adversary. But God sent Grendel many years to trouble me, till my pride was humbled, and He brought me a deliverer in thee. Wherefore I give Him thanks and pray thee to be like-minded, to bear thine honors meekly and to choose eternal gains. Go now with gladness to the feast, and to-morrow we will give forth treasure, the dear meed of warriors."

Great joy was there in many windowed Heorot, and when Night covered the land with her dusky helmet the warriors laid them down in peace and slept beneath the lofty arches, various with gold: no foe came near the noble dwelling-place; for Heorot was fully purged.

After that, when Beówulf would make ready his vessel to cross the sea again to his kinsman Hygelác, lord of Geáts, King Hrothgár loaded him with a multitude of gifts of gold and rings and battle-harness, and made a treaty with him that there should be peace forever between the Gar-Danes and the Geáts, and that the treasures

of both peoples should be held in common. So Beówulf and his companions entered their sharp-keeled ship and sailed to their home across the wide sea plain, the sea-gull's path. Hygelác welcomed him returning spoil-laden from the game of war, and Beówulf shared his treasures with his friends and kinsfolk. Yet was it for a long time a shame and reproach to the Geáts that they held the might and courage of Beówulf in but little esteem, neither made they him a ruler and a chief among them. During many years the son of Ecgtheów grew old in good and quiet deeds; for he, the fierce in war, was gentle of mind, and meekly held the might and strength wherewith he was indued of God. But the Swedes came up to battle against the Geáts, and in his time of need Hygelác went to his treasure-house and brought forth Nagling, the wound-hardened sword, old and gray spotted, of Hrethel, Beówulf's grandfather, and gave it to the strong Wægmunding, and made him captain over seven thousand warriors and gave him a royal seat. So Beówulf went to battle and drave out the enemy. But Hygelác fell in the war tumult. Thereby the broad kingdom came by inheritance into Beówulf's hand; and he was made king and held it fifty years with a strong arm against all foes, ruling wisely as a prudent guardian of his people.

Now, in those days, a terrible flaming dragon began to rule in the dark nights, a fire-drake which long had abode in the cavern of a rocky cliff hard by the sea, along a difficult and stony path unknown to men. All his cavern was full of ancient treasure in rings and vases and

golden ornaments, which he had secretly stolen during a space of three hundred years. Folk missed their gold and jewels, but knew not who the robber was, until one night a wayfarer by chance wandered into the cave and saw the precious hoard and the dragon slumbering by it, and snatched a golden drinking-cup from the glittering heap and fled. Hot burned the dragon's anger when, awaking, he missed the gold drinking-cup, and saw that his secret treasure-hoard was known to men. He rose upon his flaming wings each night and sped to and fro seeking the man who had done him this evil; and where he went he consumed houses and people and scorched the land into a wilderness. The waves of fire reached the palace and destroyed that best of buildings, the fastness of the Geáts, and the people trembled for fear of the terrible flyer of the air. Dark thoughts came into Beówulf's mind, insomuch that he was even angry with the Almighty because of the plague which visited the people, and in his bitterness he spake hard things against the Eternal Lord such as befitted him not. Then he commanded to make a variegated shield of iron, strong and well-tempered, to withstand the fire-breath of the adversary, and having put on his war mail, he called together his warriors, and said, "Many a battle, O my comrades, have I dared from my youth up; many a warrior's soul have I loosed from its shattered house of bone with my biting war-bill. Now for the greater glory of my age will I seek this flaming war-fly alone. Be it yours to abide afar off on the hill and watch the combat,

but take no part therein. The glory and the treasure and the war are mine alone. Would I might proudly grapple with nothing but my naked hands against this wretch, as of old I did with Grendel! But since the warfire is so fierce and poisonous, I take my shield and byrnie and my sword. Not a footstep will I flee till Fate make up her reckoning between us."

Then arose the famous warrior, stoutly trusting in his strength, and came to the hoary stone cliff whence waves of fire flowed like a rushing mountain torrent. Boldly and with angry words the lord of the Geáts defied the fire-drake to come out and face the thirsty steel of Nagling, his sharp-edged blade.

Quickly the winged worm answered to his challenge. Bending itself together for the contest, and darting furious flames, it closed in battle with the haughty warrior; and they who beheld afar off saw nothing but the fire which wrapped the fighters round. The good shield guarded Beówulf's body less truly than he had hoped from the beams of fire. Nagling, the hard-edged, bit less strongly than the champion, who knew so well to swing the warbill, had need in his extremity: the keen sword deceived him as a blade of such old goodness ought not to have done. The fierce treasure keeper, boiling with fury, flooded the plain in a sea of fire, so that the nobles which watched the combat turned and fled to the wood for safety. All turned and fled save one. Wigláf, son of Weohstán, a shield-warrior, only kinsman of Beówulf, saw ffer in the bitter strife, and his heart

could no longer refrain. He seized his shield of yellow lindenwood, and his old tried sword. "Comrades," he cried, "forget ye all the gifts of rings and treasure we have received from Beówulf's hands at the daily outpouring of the mead? Forget ye his past benefits and his present need?" Then he ran through the deadly smoke and the clinging fire to succor his dear lord. The flame burned up his linden shield, but Wigláf ran boldly underneath the shield of his master and fought at his side. Then Beówulf, jealous for his single fame, though heat-oppressed and wearied, swung his great war-sword and drave it down mightily upon the head of the fire-drake. But Nagling failed him, and brake in sunder with the blow; for Beówulf's hand was too strong and overpowered every sword-blade forged by mortal man, neither was it granted to him at any time that the edges of the smith's iron might avail him in war. Wildly he spurned the treacherous sword-hilt from him, and furious rushed upon the fiery worm and clutched it by the neck in the terrible gripe of his naked hands. There upon the plain he throttled it, while the burning life-blood of the fire-drake boiled up from its throat and set his hands aflame. Yet loosened he never his gripe, but held the twining worm till Wigláf carved its body in twain with his sword. Then Beówulf flung the carcass to the earth and the fire ceased.

But the fiery blood was on his hands; and they began to burn and swell; and he felt the poison course through all his veins and boil up in his breast. Then

Beówulf knew that he drew nigh the end of this poor life; and while Wigláf cooled his wounds with water, he said, "Fifty years have I shepherded my people, and though so strong no king dared greet me with his warriors, I have only fought to hold my own. Neither have I made war on any man for lust of gain or conquest, nor oppressed the weak, nor sworn unjustly. Wherefore I fear not that the Ruler of men will reproach me with the doings of my life. But now, dear Wigláf, go quickly to the cavern and bring me of the gold and many-colored gems that I may look thereon before I die; that so, feasting my eyes with the treasure I have purchased for my people, I may more gently yield up my life."

So Wigláf hastened and came to the fire-drake's

life to purchase such a treasure for my people. Bid them not to weep my death, but rather glory in my life. Let them make a funeral fire wherein to give my body to the hot war-waves; and let them build for my memorial a lofty mound to seaward on the windy promontory of Hronesnaes, that the sea-sailors as they journey on the deep may see it from afar and say, 'That is Beówulf's cairn.'"

Then from his neck he lifted his golden chain, and took his helmet and his byrnie and his ring and gave them to Wigláf, saying, "Dear friend, thou art the last of all our kin, the last of the Wægmundings. Fate hath long swept my sons away to death. I must go and seek them!" So parted his soul from his breast.

Presently came the nobles which before had fled, and found Wigláf washing the body of their prince with water and sorrowfully calling upon him by name. Bitterly spake Wigláf to them: "Brave warriors! Now that the war is over, have you in truth summoned courage up to come and share the treasure? You, who forsook the treasure-earner in his need; forsook in his extremity the high prince who gave you the very war trappings wherein you stand? I tell you nay. You shall see the treasure with your eyes and hold it in your hands, but it shall not profit you. The Swedes beyond the sea who came against Hygelác and slew him, the same that Beówulf overcame and drave out, when they learn that our strong warrior has passed into his rest, will come again and snatch the land from your weak holding and carry you

away into bondage, and seize the treasure. Let it be his who won it! Safer will he guard it in his sleep than you with feeble war-blades and weak javelins. Let the lord of the Geáts slumber with it in the cairn which we shall build for him; so shall men fear to touch the treasure as they would to snatch a sleeping lion's prey."

So with one accord they bare the hoary warrior to Hronesnaes, and from the cavern drew out the twisted gold in countless wagon loads.

Then for Beówulf did the people of the Geáts prepare a funeral pile, strong, hung round with helmets, with war-boards and bright byrnies; and weeping they laid their lord upon the wood. Eight chosen warriors walked with Wigláf round the pile with torches to kindle the bale-fire. The smoke rose aloft, the noise of mourning

to mind their king in speech and song; praising his valor; even as it is fit that a man should extol his lord and love him in his soul after his body has become valueless and only his deeds remain.

So mourned the people of the Geáts for their dear lord. And they said of him that he was the mildest and gentlest of all the kings of the world, the most gracious to his people and the most jealous for their glory.

THE STORIES OF THE VOLSUNGS

By Sir George W. Cox and Eustace Hinton Jones

I

THE STORY OF SIGMUND AND SIGNY

SIGI was the son of All-father Odin. One day he went a-hunting in a wood with a thrall named Bredi, and because Bredi slew by far the most and the finest of the deer, Sigi was angry at being outdone by a thrall; wherefore he rose up against Bredi and slew him, and hid his body in a snow-drift. For that cause fled

them; and it seemed to the king as though he had toiled and warred for naught. Then cried they both without ceasing to the gods to give them a child. And Freyja took pity on them and fetched an apple and gave it into the hands of Ljod her handmaiden, daughter of the giant Hrimnir, to give to the king. So the skymaid put on the dress of a crow, and came flying to where King Rerir sat musing on a mound, and dropped the apple in his lap. Then the king took the apple and gave it to his wife, and she ate thereof.

In due season the queen bore a son. She kissed the child at his birth, named him Volsung, and then died. Volsung grew a mighty warrior, stronger and more daring than any of his time. He wedded Ljod, the handmaiden of Freyja, and she bare him, first a son and daughter, Sigmund and Signy, which were twin, and after that nine sons. And all his seed were high-minded and of great hardihood and cunning, in which things the Volsungs far surpassed all other folk before or since.

Now when Volsung's daughter, Signy, was come of age to wed, Siggeir, King of Gothland, came across the sea to ask her for his wife.

Volsung had built a great mead hall. So big was it that there stood an oak tree named Branstock in the midst, the limbs whereof branched all about the roof, and the roots underran all the benches. In this hall Volsung made a feast for Siggeir, and led forth his daughter Signy, and betrothed her to him in presence of his men. But Signy was very loth to the marriage, having

no mind toward the King of Gothland; yet in this as in all things she bade her father rule for her.

Now on the day of the wedding feast, at eventide when the men sate by the firelight at either end of the hall, and the great oak was shadowing the midst in gloom, there came among them an old man, one-eyed and of great stature. He was clad in a spotted cloak and linen breeches tight as hosen. He wore a slouched hat on his head, and went barefoot; in his hand was a sword. He took no heed of any, but went straightway to the Branstock and smote the sword up to the hilt into the tree-trunk. Then said he, "Whoso plucketh out this sword from this stock shall have the same as a gift from me, and shall find in good sooth that never bare he better sword in hand than this." And the old man passed out:

and Signy were wed, and Siggeir got ready to cross the sea again, neither would he abide as the custom was for the end of the feast. Then came Signy, pleading to her father that the marriage might be undone, for that she had no liking for her husband, and foreknew, besides, that great evil would befall if she went away with him. But Volsung said there was no help for it, inasmuch as they were all pledged to the wedding. King Siggeir made Volsung promise to come over to Gothland with his men in three months' time, and there finish the feast: then he set sail with his bride.

At the time appointed Volsung and his sons went over the sea to Gothland to the feast. But as soon as they were come to land, Signy came and talked with her father and brothers privily, saying: "Siggeir has made ready a great army to fall upon you, wherefore make all speed back to Hunland, and gather together what warships you may, and come and fight with him. But turn back for this time or you will surely be slain."

"Daughter," answered Volsung, "all people know that long ere I was born I spake a vow that I would flee neither from fire nor sword. Men die but once, and I have fought a hundred fights and never prayed for peace."

Then Signy besought that they would at least let her die with them, and not send her back to King Siggeir. But Volsung said, "Thou art his; wherefore go back?" So she went back sorrowing.

Now at daybreak King Siggeir made ready his host

and led them forth to hunt down Volsung and his handful of folk. A brave fight the Volsungs made against that host. Eight times they hewed their way through, and turned to cut the mass in twain again, but in that fray King Volsung fell and all his men, saving only his ten sons, and these King Siggeir took and bound with cords. Then he carried the ten brethren away to a lonesome wood, and caused a great beam to be brought and set upon their feet. And each night for nine nights as they sate in the stocks, there came ravening from out the wood an old she-wolf, and bit one of the brethren till he died, then ate his flesh and went her way. But on the tenth night when only Sigmund was left alive, Signy sent a trusty man to anoint his face with honey, and to set some in his mouth. That night when the

underground and dwelt therein, and Signy nourished him with victuals.

Signy had two children by King Siggeir, but as soon as ever the eldest was ten years old she sent him away to her brother in the wood, because she would have him trained up to avenge King Volsung's death. One day Sigmund gave the boy the meal bag and set him to make ready the bread while he went to gather firing. But Sigmund, when he came back with the wood, found no bread ready. The boy sat trembling and afraid to put his hand into the meal bag, saying that there was something alive therein. Wherefore the next time his sister visited him Sigmund said, "What shall I do with this feeble-hearted brat?" She answered, "Kill him; there is none of our blood in him." Sigmund made no more ado but took and slew him. And when Signy's other son was grown of like age she sent him also to her brother; and for the same cause she bade Sigmund slay him.

One day, as Signy sat in her bower, there came a wise witch-wife to her saying, "Change likenesses with me." And Signy being willing, the witch-wife took upon herself the likeness of the queen, and in that shape abode for three days with King Siggeir. Then Signy in the guise of the witch-wife came to Sigmund in his earth-house, saying, "I have strayed in the wood and lost my way. I pray thee give me food and shelter." And Sigmund knew her not, but took her in and set meat before her. So for three days and three nights she abode with

him in his earth-house. Then she departed and met the witch-wife, and they changed themselves to their proper seeming again.

Afterward Signy bare a child whose name was Sinfjötli. He grew a big and hardy boy; fair of face like the Volsungs. When he was ten years old, Signy sent him to Sigmund. But first she sewed gloves on to his hands through flesh and skin. When she had done the like to the other boys they wept and screamed, but Sinfjötli never winced; nor yet when she flayed off his kirtle, though the skin came off with the sleeves. So soon as the lad was come to the earth-house, Sigmund set him to knead the meal while he went to fetch firing. By the time he got back the bread was made. Then Sigmund asked if he had found aught in the meal.

neither should risk the onset of more than seven men at once without howling for his fellow. And because one day Sinfjötli in his wolf-dress fought eleven men and slew them all, Sigmund finding him after the battle was angry, and ran upon Sinfjötli and worried him by the throat, because he had not called for help. Nevertheless when Sigmund saw the wound he had made in the lad's throat he was sorry and looked how he might heal him. And as it fell out, he saw a weasel bitten in the throat and how his fellow ran to a thicket and brought a leaf and laid it upon the wound, and the creature was made whole. Then Sigmund got a blade of that same herb, and therewith Sinfjötli's hurt was immediately healed. But when the time came for them to put off their wolf-gear, Sigmund took and burned their dresses lest more harm should befall because of them.

Now Sinfjötli being come to manhood, Sigmund took counsel with him as to how they should come upon King Siggeir to slay him, and accordingly as they agreed, they stole into the porch of the king's hall in the dusk of evening and hid themselves between the tuns of ale. Signy and the king had two young children; and as these played in the porch with a golden toy, a ring came off and went trundling away among the barrels. And when the children went seeking it, they saw two fierce, wild men crouched down, and away they ran to tell their father. While the king sat doubting, and thinking it no more than a youngster's tale, Signy took both the children and brought them out into the porch, saying to

Sigmund, " Here are the brats that have betrayed you. Slay them ! " Sigmund answered, " Nay, for they did it without guile." But Sinfjötli came forth from his hiding and drew his sword and slew them both. And he took the bodies and cast them into the hall at Siggeir's feet.

Then up rose the king and his men, and set on so fiercely and in so great numbers that they took Sigmund and Sinfjötli and bound them. The most of that night the king lay awake devising the worst death he could make these men suffer; and on the morrow he had a big barrow made of turf and stones, and a great flat stone set up endwise for a wall in the midst. He set Sigmund and Sinfjötli one on either side of the stone, so that they might hear each other's speech but in no wise come to-

some while after midnight. They then went and cut down wood, and set it round about the palace and kindled it. And when the palace was all ablaze Signy came running to the window. Sigmund would have got her out, but she would not.

And Signy said to Sigmund, "You have done well; but judge if I have forgotten vengeance for King Volsung! Did I begrudge to slay the worthless brats I bare to Siggeir? But I am mother to Sinfjötli! For Siggeir's bane I lodged with thee those three nights in the witch-wife's shape. Be glad; thou art Sinfjötli's father. He is the child of Volsung's son and Volsung's daughter, and by him vengeance has come for Volsung. But I?—*I* come away? and miss to see King Siggeir burn? Nay, brother dear! Merry was I not to wed with Siggeir, but merrily will I die with him."

Then leaned she from the window and kissed Sigmund her brother, and Sinfjötli, and went blithely back again into the fire and burned with Siggeir and his men.

After this Sigmund and Sinfjötli came back to Hunland, and they put down a man there which had made himself king in Volsung's room; and Sigmund reigned over Hunland and made himself a name far and wide; moreover, he took to wife Borghild, who bare him two sons, Helgi and Hamund.

Now Sinfjötli must needs go to war again for a woman's sake that was very fair. For this cause he fought with the queen's brother, who likewise had set his love upon the same maiden. And Sinfjötli slew him and

won his lands and took the damsel to himself. But Queen Borghild was not to be appeased for the slaying of her brother; and for all Sigmund could do it was a long while before she would let Sinfjötli look upon her face. Howsoever, she bade many great men to the funeral feast, and Sinfjötli came among the rest. And when the queen bare the drink to the guests she filled him a horn saying, with a fair courtesy, "Drink now, good stepson." But he looked in the horn and would not taste thereof, for he said, "A charm is therein." Then Sigmund laughed and rose up from his seat, and took the horn and drained it at a draught. Again the queen came to Sinfjötli, and mocked him, "Wilt thou get another man to drink thine ale?" He took the horn, and answered, "There is guile in the drink." So Sigmund

sight. So he turned and came home; and he put away his queen, and soon after that she died.

King Eylimi had a fair daughter named Hjordis, and Sigmund went to woo her. Thither also came King Lyngi, Hunding's son, on the same errand. And King Eylimi spake to his daughter, saying: "Thou art a wise woman, wherefore, choose whether of these two kings thou wilt take." She answered, "Although he is well stricken in years, I choose Sigmund, since he is the man of greatest fame."

So Sigmund was wedded to Hjordis and brought her home to Hunland, and King Eylimi came with them. But King Lyngi gathered together his men and came up against Sigmund to fight with him because he had taken away his bride. Sigmund sent Hjordis away into a wood, together with a certain bondmaid, and with all the treasure, to abide there while they fought. Then he and King Eylimi set up their banners by the sea and blew the trumpets; but their army was by far the fewest. Old as King Sigmund was he hewed with his sword ever in the thickest of the battle, and smote down men till his arms were red with blood even to the shoulder. Yet neither host gave way.

Now when the battle had lasted some while, there came into the fight an old man in a blue cloak, with a slouched hat on his head. He had but one eye, and in his hand he bare a bill. And when Sigmund lifted up his sword against him, the old man set his bill in the way, so the blade smote upon the bill-edge and shivered in

two. But the old man was no more to be seen. Then great dismay spread through Sigmund's host, because his good hap was departed from him. And though the king cried on his men all he might, they fell fast about him; and by eventide King Sigmund and King Eylimi were fallen in the forefront of the battle, and the war noise ceased.

At night came Hjordis stealing out of the wood, and went to and fro among the slain, seeking for Sigmund. There was yet a little life in him, and she said, "Waken, dear lord, thou shalt not die; but we will heal thee to avenge my father." He answered, "It may not be; neither will I suffer myself to be healed since Odin has broken my sword. But, behold now, thou wilt bear a child, and I know that he shall grow up the most famous

laded the ships therewith; and Hjordis and her handmaid sailed away to Denmark with the Vikings, and came to King Hjalprek's palace and there abode.

II

THE STORY OF HELGI, HUNDING'S BANE

HELGI was Sigmund's son which Borghild bare, Helgi made a name for himself when he went up to battle against Hunding that mighty king, and slew him and took his lands. So was he Hunding's bane. Afterward came Hunding's four sons with many warriors, and fought to win back their land, but Helgi overcame them and put their men to the rout.

Now as he was returning from this victory Helgi met a company of exceeding fair women, and the queen of them was Sigrun, King Hogni's daughter. So fair was she that Helgi could not take his eyes off from beholding her, and he spake to her, saying, "Fare home with me and be my queen." But Sigrun answered, "Would that I might, for verily my heart goeth out toward thee, but I have a worse fate to accomplish, since my father hath promised me in marriage to Hodbrod, the son of King Granmar; and him I despise. Go, fight him; win me, and I am thine."

Then Helgi sent out men with money to hire as many ships as they might. They got together many vessels and near a score thousand men, and Helgi made sail for King

Granmar's country. They made the land at Wolfstone, and fought their way ashore. Fierce was the battle that befell; and in the midst there came a company of shield maidens and fought on Helgi's side, chief of whom was Sigrun, the king's daughter. Then Helgi fell on King Hodbrod and slew him beneath his own banner; and seeing this Sigrun cried out, "Thou hast done well, and now I pledge thee my troth. We will share the land between us."

So Helgi, when he had overcome King Granmar and his host, became king of that realm and wedded Sigrun. After that Hogni, Sigrun's father, came up against him because he had taken away his daughter; and with him also came Dag his son. But Helgi slew Hogni, and put his men to the worst; and as for Dag, after he had taken an oath from him to make war on him no more, he let

fastest from thine enemies! Thy sword, may it never bite till in wrath it singeth round thine head! But as for Helgi, my love, he was chief among all other men, as the ash-tree that riseth from the thorns, or as the antlered deer is above the forest game."

Then she raised a barrow above Helgi and gave him a noble burial. And when Helgi was gone up to Valhalla, Odin made him lord over all things there, and Hunding came and served him, and made ready his fire, and tended his hounds and horses.

In the gloaming of the evening there came one of Sigrun's handmaidens to Helgi's mound, and behold she saw Helgi and a great company of dead warriors riding fast about the mound. Then she ran and told her mistress, and Sigrun hasted and came thither, and finding the mound uncovered, she went in and took Helgi's cold head upon her lap. Thus she made her moan: "O Helgi, my dead love, I hunger for thee, as the hawks of Odin hunger for their quarry. See, I kiss thy hair all dripping with cold dews; I take thy hands in mine. O let me warm thee back to life against my breast, and bring the light to those dull eyes again!" And the dead man spake to her. He said: "Now shall all death sorrow depart from me if thou wilt dwell with me in my mound; if thou, a fair white maiden, wilt abide in the arms of a dead man." Then Sigrun commanded a bed to be made ready in the mound, and for all her folk told her that the dead were stronger and more hurtful in the night season than in the daylight, she went in thither and

lay by her dead lord. But in the early twilight Helgi rose up, saying, "Hark, I hear the crowing of Salgofnir, the golden cock upon Valhalla. I must ride my pale horse along the reddening ways to Windhelm's bridge. Farewell; the dead ride fast." Therewith Helgi departed, and after that came no more to the mound.

Sigrun watched and waited night by night, till the hope of his coming waned away. Then because of her sorrow she sickened and died.

Of old it was commonly believed that folk should be born again. And it was said that Helgi the Scathe of Hadding, who lived long after, was none other than Helgi, Hunding's bane; and they say that Kara the Valkyrie, daughter of Halfdan, was Sigrun.

III

THE STORY OF SIGURD AND BRYNHILD

Now soon after Hjordis was come to Hjalprek's palace in Denmark, she bare dead Sigmund's son. They called his name Sigurd, and as he grew up there was no child but loved him. Truly he waxed a man of great might and prowess, and for his high mind and his stout heart he has ever been held above all the men of the north. Regin was his foster-father, and taught him the runes, and to speak with strange tongues, and play at chess, as was the wont of king's sons. So the boy grew

up, and his mother in due time wedded with Alf, King Hjalprek's son.

One day Regin asked Sigurd if he knew how much of his father's treasure the king had, and whether he could trust the king therewith. Sigurd answered, "Trust him? Ay; why not? I can get it when I want it." Another time came Regin, saying, "I marvel truly to see thee run about afoot like a knave. Why doth not the king give thee a horse to ride?" Sigurd said, "I need but ask and have." Therewith he went to King Hjalprek and asked for a horse; and immediately the king bade him go take one for himself, together with whatsoever thing else he desired; for the king loved him as though he were his own son. Wherefore on the next day Sigurd went alone into the wood, and meeting there an old, long-bearded man, he said, "I am come to choose a horse; give me counsel thereon." Then the old man drave the horses down into the deeps of the river Busiltarn; and it fell out that they all swam back to land save a young gray horse whose back no man had crossed. "Take him," said the graybeard, "he is of Sleipnir's breed;" and saying this the old man vanished away. That old man was Odin; he gave Sigurd the foal Grani, which was the best horse in the world.

Regin came again to Sigurd, saying, "I can tell thee where there is much wealth for the winning and great fame to be got thereby. On the Glistening Heath dwells the dragon Fafnir; he has more treasure than any king ever yet heaped together." Sigurd said, "I have

heard of this evil worm and how he is so terrible none durst go against him." Regin answered, "Nay; men make a great tale about him, but he is no worse than other lingworms. Thy fathers, the old Volsungs, would have recked little of him." Sigurd said, "I am scarce out of my childish years, and have not yet the hardihood of my sires; but why art thou so eager to drive me to this encounter?"

Then Regin told him about Fafnir, saying, "I had two brothers, Fafnir and Otter. Otter was a great fisher, and by day he put on the shape of an otter, the better to take the fish, but he always brought them home to Hreidmar our father, begrudging nothing. As to Fafnir, he was greedy and grasping, and wanted everything for his own. In the swirl where Otter went fishing abode a dwarf called Andvari, in the likeness of a pike, for which reason the swirl was named Andvari's force. One day Otter caught a salmon in the force and brought it to land, and when he had eaten it he lay slumbering on the bank. It befell that Loki passed that way with Odin and Hahnir; and Loki, seeing Otter asleep, flung a stone and killed him. Then they flayed off the otter's skin and brought it to Hreidmar's house, and showed him what they had done. But when Hreidmar saw that they had slain his son he was wroth, and immediately laid hands on them, neither would he let them go till they promised to fill the otter skin with gold, and cover it without with gold. Then went Loki to Ran, and having borrowed her net, cast it into Andvari's force and took the pike; and he made

Andvari bring out his gold and fill the otter skin and cover it without. Andvari gave up all his gold save only one ring, for he said that whoso had that gold ring should find it his bane. But when the gods brought the otter skin to Hreidmar he looked at it and spied one of the muzzle hairs uncovered; and he would have Andvari's last ring to cover that hair withal. Then Loki rejoiced, saying to Hreidmar, 'That ring shall be the bane of thee and thy son!' And so it fell out. For Fafnir murdered his father to get the gold, and after that became more grudging than ever. So he grovelled till he grew a worm, the worst of worms, and fell to brooding on his treasure. But I went to King Hjalprek and became his master smith." Then Sigurd said, "If thou wouldst have me slay this dragon, make me now by thy craft a trusty sword."

Straightway went Regin to his forge and made a sword. When it was done Sigurd took the sword in his hands and smote it on the anvil to prove it, but the blade brake and he cast it away, bidding Regin forge a better. So Regin blew up his fire and made another sword. But Sigurd looked thereon and said, "A plague on thy smithying, Regin! Art thou a traitor like all thy kin?" And he took that brand and brake it likewise across the anvil.

Then went Sigurd to his mother Hjordis and asked for the shards of his father's sword Gram. And when he had gotten them he came to Regin in the smithy and bade him weld them together. Regin, grown surly by this

time, flung the pieces in the fire and took a welding-heat on them. When the sword was joined, and he bare it from the forge, it seemed to the smith that fire burned along its edges. Then Sigurd took and smote the sword into the anvil, and clave the anvil down to the stock; but the edge of the blade was not turned. He took a lock of wool and flung it in the river against the stream, and cut it clean in two with the sword. And he said, "It is a good blade." And Regin said, "Now I have made a brand for thee thou wilt keep thy troth and go and fight with Fafnir." But Sigurd answered, "All in good time, but first I must avenge my father."

Sigurd went away to Gripir the seer, who knew things to come, and what should happen to men; and he besought Gripir to foreshow him his life. Then spake the seer: "Thou wilt get riches from a dragon, but thou

avenge his father on the Hundings. And the king having furnished him with all he desired, Sigurd steered the noblest of the dragon keels, and led the way across the green sea plain. For some days they sailed with fair wind and weather; then the color faded from the sea, the wan sky gathered thick with piling clouds, the wave-mounds rose, the storm wind beat their crests to foam and flung the spume flakes wide. Like breaking hills the waters tumbled in upon the deck; yet, for all the storm was so fierce, Sigurd would take in no sail, but rather bade his men crowd on the more. No Volsung ever furled sail for any wind that blew. In the midst of the storm a certain man hailed them from a cliff top, and Sigurd steered that way and took him aboard. When they asked his name he said, "Once when I gladdened Odin's ravens in the battle, men called me Hnikar. Call me that, or Feng or Fjolnir, as you will." Then Sigurd, being ware that Hnikar knew the fates and what was to come, asked him concerning the things which betoken good and evil to a warrior. Hnikar said, "It bodeth good for him that goeth to war if he see a dark-winged raven, or two young warriors in the porchway, or if he hear a wolf howl from beneath an ash-tree. To trip the foot when clad for battle is a sorry token, for it showeth that the Disir are on either side of thee, and greedy for thy wounding. The warrior should go forth in the morning well combed, well washed, well fed, so he may endure the toils of the day; but at evening let him fight with his back to the setting sun, that the

eyes of his enemy may be dazzled, while his own may see the better."

Soon afterward the storm abated, and Hnikar vanished away. And when the vessels were come to Hunland where King Lyngi the Hunding reigned, Sigurd got his men ashore and laid waste the country with fire and sword, and drave the folk inland, so that they fled to their king and told him how the Volsungs were pillaging the shores. The King Lyngi sent messages throughout his realm and gat together a great army and came out, he and his brothers, to withstand Sigurd; and an exceeding fierce fight there was. Sigurd went about the battle with his good sword Gram and smote down men and horses till one could not see his mail for blood, and his foes shrank aback before him. He it was who smote

whereas I see by the track of him that he is very great." But Regin counselled him to make a pit in the drake's pathway and sit therein, so that when the worm came to his watering he might smite him to the heart. Then said Sigurd, "Aye, but the blood of so huge a creature will flood the heath, and fill the pit, and drown me therein." Regin answered, "What profiteth it to give thee counsel? Thou has not the courage of thy kindred." Howbeit, when Sigurd rode away over the heath to seek the dragon, Regin sneaked off and hid himself to save his skin.

Now when Sigurd was at work digging the pit, he was ware of the same old man with the long beard who gave him his horse. The graybeard bade him dig many pits wherein the blood might run, and then vanished away. So Sigurd made pits all about the heath and hid himself in one of them. Presently the great worm came creeping along his track, snorting venom as he went, and shaking the earth with his roaring. Sigurd had no fear, but from the pit thrust up his sword and smote the drake beneath the left shoulder to the heart.

Then Fafnir, when he knew he had gotten his death-thrust, lashed out right and left in his madness, and brake to pieces all the trees about him. And he spake to Sigurd, saying, "Who drove thee to this deed? And who art thou that fearest not my terribleness like other folk?" Sigurd said, "My heart, my hand, my sword, these urged me to thy slaying. I am Sigmund the Volsung's son, and 'an old sire maketh a hardy boy.'"

Then said Fafnir, " Rejoice not to win the gold ; there is a curse on it, and it shall prove thy bane as it has been mine." " Fret not thyself to lose it then," answered Sigurd, " for naught it availeth for a man to cling to his gold when his life-day is done ; but as for me I will hold it till that day of days."

Now as soon as Fafnir was dead, Regin crawled out from his hiding-place and began to make great ado, saying, " Alas ! thou hast slain mine own brother, and verily I am not wholly guiltless in this matter." Sigurd mocked him for hiding in the heather bush, and bade him take comfort, for that he was guiltless of aught save cowardice. Regin said, " Boast not thyself, for had it not been for the sharp sword I made thee thou couldst not have prevailed against him." Sigurd laughed, " Better in fight

the meat to another, but eat it thyself—so shalt thou become the wisest of men." Another spake, "Regin doth but beguile thee that he may get the treasure." "If I were Sigurd," said a third, "I would smite off his head, and save all disputing about the gold." "Well magged, gossip," cried another bird, "for 'where wolf's ears are be sure their teeth are not far off'; and when he has done so, let him ride to Hindfell. There sleeps fair Brynhild, and from her he shall gain great wisdom."

Sigurd thought within himself, "Regin shall never be my bane; so let both brothers travel by one road"—and with that he drew his sword Gram and smote off Regin's head by the shoulders. Then straightway the birds broke out a-singing, and in their songs they told of Brynhild, the maiden that lay sleeping in a flaming hall of gold upon the mountain Hindfell; told how Odin struck the sleep-thorn into her because, being a Valkyrie, she had chosen for death in battle one he willed not to be slain; told how only Sigurd might wake her from the torment of her sleep.

Then Sigurd ate of Fafnir's heart and put by the rest; and after that he went and sought out Fafnir's dwelling-place, which was dug deep into the earth, and got the treasure out. There was more gold than two dray horses could carry, besides the Helm of Awe and the gold Byrnie, and many other precious things. He set the gold in two big chests and laded them upon his horse Grani, whom he would fain have led by the bridle, because the burden was so great; yet would not that good

steel wir til: his master leaped upon his back. Then, swift as the wind, he sped away for Hindfell which lies by the land of the Franks.

Now when Sigurd came to the mountain, he saw as it were a flame of fire and a great light go up from Hindfell. And when he reached the top, behold, a shield-hung castle shining with the glory of the gold; above, upon the topmost tower, a banner; but all about was desolate and still. Then went he in. There was silence, save his footfall sounding in the hall. But as he wandered hither and thither he came upon a fair maiden fast asleep and lying in her armor. At first he wist it had been a man, till he took her helmet off and saw the golden locks stream all about her head. So fast was the byrnie set upon her that it seemed to have grown to her flesh; and because of this byrnie in which she went to the wars, the maiden was called Brynhild; but Sigurd cut it with his sword as it had been no more than cloth, and rent it from the collar and tare the sleeves away.

Then Brynhild opened her eyes and said, "Who has prevailed to rend my byrnie and to deliver me from my long sleep?"

He answered, "I, Sigurd the Volsung, slayer of Fafnir; I that bear Fafnir's helm upon my head, and Fafnir's bane in my hand; I rent the byrnie."

Brynhild said, "Long and wearily have I slumbered! How sweet it is to see the day again, and the bright sky, and the plentiful green earth! It was when Helm Gunnar fought with Agnar, and Odin promised him the

victory, that I rebelled against All-Father and chose for death Helm Gunnar in his stead; so Odin pierced me with the sleep-thorn, and doomed me when I woke to love but to possess not; to wed, but not to have my will. Yet vowed I a vow that I would only love a man which knew not fear."

Then Sigurd besought her to teach him wisdom. Brynhild fetched a beaker and made a love drink and bare to him; and while he drank she showed him the hidden lore of the runes that are the root of all things. She taught him runes of war, of love, of feasting, and of healing; showed him words and signs that have power over herbs, and cattle, and men—yea, that compel the Æsir up in Asgard; showed him how and where to carve them, on gold and glass, on mead-horn, on the sword-hilt, on the rudder of the ship, on bough and flower-bud, on chariot-wheel, upon the eagle's bill, and on the witch-wife's seat.

As Sigurd listened, his eyes beheld her beauty while she spake; and he said, "Surely no wiser nor sweeter woman than thou art may be found in the wide world; therefore will I have thee for mine own, because thou art grown so dear to me." She answered, "Though I had all the sons of men to choose from, thee would I take beyond them all." And so they plighted their troth.

Then Sigurd rode away. His golden shield was wrought with many folds; pictured thereon was the image of the drake, in brown and red. Gold-wrought were his

weapons, gold the housings of his horse, and on them all was blazoned the image of the drake, that men might know the slayer of the great worm Fafnir. His hair was golden red and fell about his face in locks; his beard of the same hue, thick and short: high-nosed he was; high-boned and broad his face; so bright were his eyes that few durst gaze up into them. He was wide as two men between the shoulders; and as for his height, when he girt on his sword Gram which was seven spans long, and passed through standing corn, the sheath point smote the ears as he went. Persuasive was he of speech, and so wise withal that none could gainsay his words; gentle to his friends, terrible to his enemies; and no man ever shamed him or put him in fear.

Sigurd journeyed till he came to Hlymdale to the dwelling of a great chief named Heimir, who had wedded

the window and saw a maiden, and how she wrought his deeds in gold with wondrous skill and long patience. When he knew that it was Brynhild, he took no more joy in hunting, but left his steed idle in the stall, and his hawks to pine upon their blocks.

Then Alswid asked, what ailed him that he would no longer join their games. He answered, "I have seen Brynhild, the fairest woman, and in her needlework she works the story of my life; deeds past and deeds to come." Alswid said, "It is vain to think of her; for Bryhild has never let a man sit beside her, nor given him drink; she is a war maid and driveth men to battle to win fame; but none may love her." "Nevertheless," said Sigurd, "I would make trial and know for certain." So on the next day he came to Brynhild in her bower and greeted her. She said, "Glad am I since thou art here, but who shall say if gladness may endure to life's end?" Then he sate down beside her on the bench; and she forbad him not. There came four damsels bearing mead in golden beakers. Brynhild arose and poured the wine and bare to Sigurd, and gave him to drink. He took the beaker; then took the arms that bare it, and drew them about his neck, and kissed her; she forbad him not. And he said, "Thou art the fairest maid in all the earth, and I am wholly thine." But Brynhild said, "Is it wise to plight all thy faith to a woman? Thou mayst change and break thy pledge." He answered, "If my tongue pledged thee not, my heart is fixed for now and ever. I can never change, however

[illegible] ... we are wed.' Brynhild, [illegible] ... will never come ... for it is [illegible] ... Then [illegible] Sigurd [illegible] ... Rather would [illegible] ... Thinkest [illegible] ... Gjuki's daughter [illegible] ... Then Sigurd [illegible] ... And [illegible] ... Then [illegible] ... Sigurd [illegible] ... gold ring. [illegible] ... ring of his hoard, [illegible] ... And after they had plighted their [illegible] ... his way and [illegible] with [illegible]

[illegible] of the Rhine dwelt King Gjuki and his [illegible] Grimhild. There they ruled a wide realm, and had three sons, Gunnar, Hogni, and Guttorm, all men of great valor and renown, and an only daughter named Gudrun, who was bright and fair as the summer sunshine. But one night Gudrun dreamed an ill dream, and her joy departed from her, neither would she take pleasure in

anything till she should learn what the dream might signify. And when there was no one found within her palace that could read the meaning of the dream, her maidens counselled her to seek out Brynhild because of her great wisdom, and because she knew the runes which are the root of all things. So Gudrun arrayed herself and her maidens in apparel of great price, and took her journey and came seeking Brynhild.

Brynhild sate in her hall, well knowing who was come seeking her, and she sent to meet Gudrun and her women, and brought them to the castle, and served them there with meat and drink in silver vessels, and gave them good greeting. Then perceiving Gudrun to be somewhat shy of speech, Brynhild began to talk of the great men of the time and their deeds. And when she had spoken of Haki and Hagbard and Sigar and many more, Gudrun said gently, "Why hast thou not named my brethren, for in truth they are held to be first among mighty men?" Impatient of her words Brynhild answered, "Of what use to talk of them, or even of those whereof I spake? Hast thou not heard of Sigurd the Volsung? He is king of them all, and more renowned than any man." Then with fondness in her eyes she told of Sigurd's birth and nourishing, and dwelt with pride upon his deeds. Gudrun said, "Perchance thou lovest him, and so dost deem him peerless. But I am saddened with a dream, and have no mind to speak of other things. Wilt thou tell me truly what it betokeneth?" "I will keep back nothing," answered Brynhild.

"I thought in my dream," said Gudrun, "that as I wandered in a wood with many other maidens, we saw a hart with golden hair, that for its beauty and greatness far excelled the other deer of the forest. We all sought to take him, deeming him more to be desired than all other things. How it befell I know not, but I got him. Then I took and nurtured him, and he grew so dear to me that tongue cannot tell, when suddenly there came a fierce woman—"

Brynhild's face grew dark and angry.

Gudrun looked into her eyes and cried, "O Brynhild, *it was thou! Thou* camest as I fondled him—"

Brynhild cried fiercely—"Yea. *I* came and shot the deer upon thy knees, gave thee a wolf-cub in his stead, and sprinkled thee with thy brothers' blood. Was that thy dream?"

Gudrun bowed her head and hid her face.

"Then hear the reading of it. Thou wilt take Sigurd from me, but thou shalt not have him long. A mighty strife will come by cause of thee and me, and blood will flow. But woe is me! For I may never win my well-beloved. Away! lest I seek to tempt the Fates again!"

Then Gudrun and her maidens rose up quickly and journeyed home; but Brynhild sat and mused upon her punishment ordained of Odin.

Now Sigurd bade farewell to King Heimir and took his way with his war-gear and treasure and came riding till he reached the hall of King Giuki, who seeing his

comeliness, and how he shone in golden array, at first deemed him come down from the gods, but when he learned his name and knew him for the slayer of Fafnir, bade him welcome to abide with them. So Sigurd remained with King Giuki and his sons, and proved himself foremost in all their war-games.

But Giuki's wife, Grimhild, when she saw how goodly a man Sigurd was, and heard him speak continually of Brynhild and his love for her, began to cast about how she might lead him to wed with her daughter Gudrun. For she saw that even her sons held him for a man of far greater prowess than they. So one night when they sate drinking in the mead-hall, the queen arose and bare a subtile drink to Sigurd. Sigurd took the horn, but no sooner had he drank thereof than the remembrance of Brynhild and all his love for her straightway departed from him.

And the queen said, "Why journey further? Abide with us: Giuki will be thy father, I thy mother; Gunnar and Hogni shall be thy brethren. Tarry here, and we will make a kingdom stronger than any upon earth."

Sigurd liked her speech, for his memory was stolen away by the enchantment of that drink. So he abode with them, and strengthened the realm; and Giuki and his sons prospered exceedingly and made themselves greatly to be feared of all kings round about, because of Sigurd's abiding there.

Then it befell that as Gudrun poured the mead one night and gave him drink, Sigurd took note how fair she

was and full of courtesy. And ever thenceforward his eyes would follow her about and rest upon her face. Giuki was very glad thereof, and came to Sigurd saying, "Seldom will a king offer his daughter to any man, but rather will wait to be entreated; yet because of thy might and worthiness Gudrun shall be thine; yea, though none other man should get her for all his prayers. Take her to wife and make alliance with us, and go no more away."

And the thing seemed good to Sigurd, because the maiden was very fair in his eyes; and he answered, "Great is the honor which thou payest me. Let it be as thou hast said."

So they made the marriage feast, and Sigurd was wed to Gudrun. He gave his new-made wife to eat of the

Budli answered, "I cannot say you yea nor nay, since Brynhild is so high-minded; she will wed whom she will. Go, and may your wooing prosper." Then came they to Heimir in Hlymdale. He told how Brynhild abode upon the mountain Hindfell, in a castle girt about with fire, and how she swore to wed that man alone who should ride through and come to her.

So they took their journey and rode up the steep sides of Hindfell, when lo they saw a castle with a golden roof-tree, hedged all about with roaring flames.

Straightway Gunnar put his horse to face the fire, and smote the spurs into his flanks: but the horse stood shuddering, and backed and reared, but would not go forward. "Lend me thy horse Grani," said Gunnar to Sigurd, "for mine will not tread this fire." With right good will Sigurd got him down from off his horse, and Gunnar mounted him. Grani galloped to the fire, but there stood still: neither for all Gunnar could do would he go into the flame.

Then Sigurd said, "I will compass the matter for thee;" so he and Gunnar changed likenesses. And Sigurd taking upon himself the shape and seeming of Gunnar, mounted Grani. Now when he had his master on his back, and felt his golden spurs, Grani leaped blithely into the fire. Fiercer the flames uprose and licked the sky; red rolled the clouds; the earth shook with the roaring of the fire. Yet Sigurd rode on, and with his good sword Gram he cut the flames to right and left, and laid them low. So the fire slaked and he rode

on and through, and reached the palace, where sate Brynhild in her byrnie, proud as swan on wave, her helmet on her head, her sword in hand. He lighted off his horse and came into the hall.

She asked him, "Who art thou? What wouldest thou in my hall?"

Sigurd answered, "I am Gunnar, son of King Giuki. For thee I have ridden through the fire, and now I claim thee for my wife."

Heavily she spake: "I have little mind to wed. O, Gunnar, save thou be the best and chiefest among men, I pray thee go thy way. For I have been in battle with the kings; red is my sword with the blood of warriors; and still I hanker after war."

He said, "I, Gunnar, have ridden through the fire for thee; and by thine oath, for weal or woe, do I constrain thee."

Then because of her oath Brynhild rose from her seat and greeted him as her lord, and served him at the table. Three nights lay Sigurd beside her in her bed; but between them he set his naked sword-blade. And when she would know why the sword lay there, he told her that so it was fated he should wed his wife.

And after three days when Sigurd would depart, Brynhild drew from her finger the ring which he had given her before—the ring which Andvari had cursed—and set it for a pledge upon his hand. He gave her another ring from Fafnir's treasure; then rode back through the fire and came to Gunnar. The

men changed semblances again and journeyed homeward.

Then came Brynhild to Heimir her brother-in-law, saying, "Behold, a king named Gunnar rode through my fire. Truly I weened no man save Sigurd, my beloved, should have dared those flames. But Gunnar trode the fire and I am his." He answered, "Who can ever tell what shall be? Who can alter that which is?"

Afterward King Giuki and Grimhild his queen held a great feast, and made a wedding for their son. King Budli came; with him his daughter Brynhild, and Atli her brother; Sigurd and Gudrun were there. Great was the joy at the feast, and great was the rejoicing throughout the realm, because Gunnar was married to the fair Brynhild. They twain sate together at the table in the mead-hall, and pledged each other in the wine-cup.

But Sigurd went away apart and groaned in spirit; for at that feast his memory came back. He thought upon his broken oaths; knew what he had won and lost, and gloom fell on him.

One day the two queens went bathing in the river together; and seeing Brynhild go much further out into the water than she dared venture, Gudrun asked wherefore she did this. Brynhild answered, "Why should not I surpass thee in all things? Thy husband is but King Hjalprek's thrall. Mine is the foremost among men. Gunnar rode through the fire for me."

Then Gudrun's anger was kindled against Brynhild because she reviled her husband; and she answered, "Were

it not better to hold thy peace as I have done? Why revilest thou my lord? Who but the slayer of Fafnir rode through thy fire and lay beside thee? Who but Sigurd the first of men? See on my hand the ring thou gavest him, Andvari's ring!"

Very pale waxed Brynhild. She knew the ring; and answered not, but clad herself and went her way.

Next day came Gudrun to Brynhild in her bower, saying, "Why grievest thou? Hast thou not wedded him whom thou didst choose? My brother Gunnar is a mighty man. Sure there is none nobler in thine eyes, none dearer to thine heart—not even Hjalprek's thrall?"

Then said Brynhild: "Cruel and hard of heart art thou. Why wilt thou triumph over me? Thou hast taken my love, the noblest man upon the earth. I loved him because of his glory and his might. I love him yet, him only. What is Gunnar beside Sigurd? Be satisfied; thou hast him. Love him, for thy time is short. Aye; take him fast within thine arms. But hold thy peace. Tempt me not on to break with Fate and snatch him from thee ere the hour be come. Yet how can I bear to know thou hast him even for a little moment! Thou with thy littleness of heart and poverty of love! He with his mighty soul and peerless manliness! So cold a thing as thou couldst not have won the man that knew my burning love, save thou hadst drugged his mind to sleep and robbed his memory of my very name."

Then went Brynhild up into her chamber, and fell down upon her bed. Wan as a dead woman she grew.

She spake no word, because of the bitterness of the thoughts within her. Presently came Gunnar seeking what ailed her, and after he had urged her long, she cried, "Go from me! I am not thine. Thou didst not dare the fire. With guile hast thou gotten me; with guile thy mother stole my troth-plight's love from me. No king, no champion thou art, but a common man who in the danger-time turns pale and quakes for fear. I swore to wed the noblest man alive: I loathe thee since thou art not he. Privily hast thou beguiled me, but openly and not without warning will I reward thee. Guard thyself quickly, for now is thy death day come!"

Then leaped she from the bed and drew her sword, and fell upon King Gunnar, and straightway would have taken his life, but Hogni, his brother, came running in; and between them they got her down and bound her fast.

Nevertheless in a little while it repented Gunnar that he had bound her, and he came and set her free. Yet would not Brynhild any the more be appeased. She said, "Never again in bower or hall shall I make merry or be glad. No words of kindness shall I ever speak or hear. No more my fingers shall do woman's work." Then went she to her needlework wherein were wrought in gold and divers colors Sigurd's deeds, and rent it in pieces; and she passed up into her bower and set open the doors so that the noise of her wailing was heard afar; and ever she made her moan, "Give me Sigurd, or I die." So she cried out in her bitter sorrow till, grief-wearied, she fell asleep.

Seven days she slept, and none could waken her. Her bower-maidens feared greatly, and said one to another, "The wrath of the gods has fallen on her."

When Gudrun heard it she repented of her ill words, and had great pity of heart for Brynhild. And Gudrun went with Gunnar to seek to waken her, but in vain; and after that she came with Hogni, yet could they not get speech of her. Then Gudrun besought Sigurd to go, for she said, "Peradventure thou wilt waken her; but oh, my lord, be tender to her, for her grief is very sore and hard to bear." So Sigurd went up into her chamber and lifted up his voice and cried, "Awake, Brynhild! For the night is past and the sun shineth all about thee." Brynhild heard his voice and opened her eyes.

"Why art thou come?" she said. "Too late hast

Gunnar, for he is a brave man; more to be desired is his love than much red gold. Wherefore turn thine heart toward him and forget all else."

She said, "O Sigurd, thou dost root all gentleness from out my breast. How canst thou teach me to love aught but thee? Rather would I see my sword red with thy blood than hear this counsel from thy lips. For now am I become loathsome in thy sight; and thou knowest neither the heart that is in me, nor how fierce the love I bear thee."

"Brynhild," he said, "I love thee better than my life; and when I found too late that I was beguiled, sore was my pain. But I have sought to live it down, and to put my trouble from me as a king should do. I pity thee, for I have borne a heavy heart full long."

"Thy grief and pity come too late," she cried; "thou art not mine but Gudrun's; thou lovest her; wherefore my life is become hateful to me, and I will not live."

He answered, "It is true. Gudrun has grown dear to me; I love her. Yet, rather than thou shouldst die I will put her away, and wed with thee." Thereat his heart so heaved within his breast that the rings of his mail-coat burst asunder.

She cried, "I will not have thee. Thou lovest her. Go to her! Leave me to myself."

With a heavy heart rose Sigurd and went his way. But Brynhild fell weeping afresh; and when her tears were done very dreadful grew her mind. Gunnar came

to her, and she said, "Sigurd has talked with me, and I have showed him all my heart. Little he careth for my pain since Gudrun has won his love away. He pities me, and bids me give my love to thee. Now he has gone to Gudrun, to tell my grief for her to mock at me. It is too hard to bear. She shall not have him! Either he, or I, or thou shalt die."

Then spake Gunnar, "How can I assuage thy sorrow? For with all thy frowardness to me I love thee; yet for that same cause is my life grown burdensome."

And Brynhild answered: "I cannot bear that she should have my Sigurd and mock my woe. Gunnar, I loathe thee; yet if thou wouldst slay him in her arms, I feel almost that I could love thee. I should be merry at her grief. Go, slay him; else thou shalt lose thy

brother Guttorm to the deed, since he was clean of any oath to Sigurd. Then they fetched Guttorm and promised him power and dominion if he would do this thing; and they took and seethed him a pottage of wolf meat and of strange worms and fish, and gave him to eat; so he grew fierce and thirsted after blood.

In the morning came Guttorm stealthily to the door of the chamber where Sigurd was, and peeped in. Gudrun lay sleeping on his bosom; her white arms clasped about his neck. Twice Guttorm stole in at the door, and twice shrank back; for he thought he saw the glitter of his eyes. The third time he ran in, sword in hand, and thrust Sigurd through therewith, so that the sword smote fast into the bed and pinned him there. Guttorm turned to flee, but never reached the door; for Sigurd caught his sword Gram by the hilt and flung it after him, and cut him clean asunder at the waist; so he fell dead in the doorway, head and shoulders one way, and legs and groin the other. When Gudrun awoke from her soft sleep, and felt the blood all streaming about, and saw her lord death smitten, she wept and bewailed so piteously that Sigurd as he lay a-dying lifted his head and kissed her. "Weep not," he said; "death cometh to us all; this was foretold to me, but when it drew near it was hidden from mine eyes lest I should fight with Fate. Brynhild has wrought my death because she loved me before all men; yet little have I deserved this treachery from thy brethren."

Sigurd closed his eyes; fast ebbed the life tide through

his wound. He drew a weary breath, and yielded up the ghost.

Then Gudrun in her sharp sorrow gave a very bitter cry. Brynhild heard it in her bower, and loud laughed she. Gunnar shuddered as he heard her laugh. But Brynhild, still laughing fiercely, went out and caught up Gudrun's child and slew it.

Now it came to pass when Gudrun sate over the dead body of her lord, that her anguish fell very heavy on her, so that she was like to die. She sighed not, nor moaned, neither smote she her hands together like other women. She shook as though her heart would break. But she could not weep. Many wise Yarls came seeking to comfort her.

Hushed sate Gudrun; she spake not; the tears came not.

They said, "Make her weep, or she will die."

There came many noble Yarls' wives arrayed with gold, and sate beside her. Each told the sharpest sorrow she had known.

Giaflaug, Giuki's sister, said, "Of husband and children have I been bereft; of all my brethren and sisters. Lo, I am left behind to mourn until I go to them."

Gudrun wept not.

Herborg, Queen of Hunland, said, "My husband and seven sons fell in one fight. A captive was I carried away into a strange land, and there they set me to tie the shoe-latchets of that king's wife who slew them all; often

was I beaten with the lash, and then only did I dare to sorrow for my dead."

Yet none the more might Gudrun weep; so sad was she.

Then Gullrond, Giuki's daughter, came. She said, "No sorrow but her own will bring the tears." Down from the dead man's face she drew the cere cloth, and turned the death-cold cheek to Gudrun, saying, "Sister, look on him! Come, lay thy lips to his, and kiss him; for he loved thee well."

She looked once only: saw the golden hair all stiff with blood; the body broken with the sword rent. The tears upwelled and rained upon her knees. Fast wept Gudrun, Giuki's daughter.

Then she found words and spake: "Like the bulrush towering from the grass, such was my Sigurd among Giuki's sons. As a pearl of price upon a king's brow, so glorious was my Sigurd among men. How shall I sit upon my seat, or go up to my bed, and miss my Sigurd? Cursed be thou, Gunnar, for thy broken oaths! And cursed be the day when Sigurd saddled Grani to go a-wooing of Brynhild on the mountain!" Then cried Brynhild, "A curse on her who brought thy tears and gave thee speech again"! And Gullrond said, "Hast thou no pity—no compassion? Away, thou bane of man, thou woe of woman! Luckless thou camest to thy mother's lap, born for the sorrow of all folk."

Sigurd's horse Grani, when he saw his master's corpse, made such a pitiful crying that Gudrun was fain to go

and speak with him, even as a man talks with his friend. But he drooped his head and sank down on the earth and died.

By a pillar stood Brynhild, gazing on Sigurd's wound, and gloating over the woe of Gudrun. Howbeit Brynhild went presently up into her chamber and fell weeping bitterly. Gunnar and Hogni came to her, but naught their words availed to soothe her dreadful mind. She said, "Sigurd is mine. Whither he goeth I will go; and none shall keep me from him now."

Then Gunnar arose, and took her in his arms, and besought her that she would not die, but live, because of the love wherewith he loved her. But she put him from her, and would suffer none to hinder her. Then commanded she her people to bring forth gold and scatter it

him by my side. Only let there be set between us a drawn sword, even as in those three days when we lay in one bed and were called man and wife together. So, as we go up to Valhalla, the shining door that openeth for him shall not swing to and shut me out."

So saying, the life passed from her. Dead lay Brynhild on her pillows. Gunnar did all things as she had said. He built a mighty wood pile, hung round about with goodly hangings and strewn with treasure; with hawks and hounds at the head and foot. On the pile he laid Brynhild and Sigurd; between them a drawn sword. Then kindled he the bale fire. The flames arose and wrapped the pile, and roared up to the sky. So ended their life days.

IV

THE FALL OF THE GIUKINGS

Now Gudrun, been very bitter against her brethren, went away alone to mourn for Sigurd, and made her dwelling in the woods. And after long abiding there, she wandered forth, and came to King Alf's palace in Denmark, where, for seven years, she solaced her mind with setting forth in needlework of many colors the glorious deeds of kings and warriors. But when Queen Grimhild knew of her harboring in Denmark she came journeying thither with her sons Gunnar and Hogni, and a great company of folk bringing gold and silver, seeking to make atonement to Gudrun for the slaying of

her husband and her son. Softly they spake to her and would fain be reconciled. Howbeit Gudrun answered them nothing, and took no heed either of them or of their gifts.

Then Grimhild mixed a cold drink, and bare to Gudrun in a horn whereon strange blood-red runes were cut about the rim. The might of earth and sea was mingled in that drink. And it befell when Gudrun had drank of it that the memory of her wrongs passed away, and she remembered no more the bloodguiltiness of her brethren toward her. So after they had held fellowship together and made good cheer, Grimhild spake to Gudrun to wed with Atli, Budli's son, saying it would surely redound to the profit of them all, inasmuch as Atli was a king of great might. Gudrun was very loth thereto, thinking it an unseemly thing for her to wed with Brynhild's brother; but they so beset her with promises and threats that at last she yielded, saying, "Little joy and great sorrow will come of it." Lightly esteeming her words, they all made ready and set out and journeyed twelve days by land and sea, till they came to King Atli's mead hall. There the Giukings gave their sister to Atli, to be his wife, and after the feast they rose up and departed to their own land. But Gudrun did not make merry, nor were her eyes bright like a bride's, nor was her heart gladdened when she looked upon her husband.

Years wore on and there was little fondness between the two. Many times Atli fell thinking of the treasure which Sigurd gat from Fafnir, and how by right it should

have been Gudrun's dower, whereas her brethren kept it back. And when he coveted the treasure very sore, Atli determined to send out men to go to the Giukings and bid them to a feast. But Gudrun got wind of it, and fearing some treachery to her brethren, took a gold ring and cut runes thereon to warn them not to come: and she knitted a wolf's hair in the ring and gave it to the messengers to take to Gunnar. But while they were on the journey, one of the messengers more subtle than the rest, by name Vingi, perceived how the runes ran; and he meddled with them in such wise as to make it seem as if Gudrun in her runes had prayed her brethren to come.

The messengers being come to Gunnar and Hogni in their mead hall, the kings outpoured the wine and bade them welcome. And when the message was delivered, Hogni took his sister's ring and read the runes; but misdoubting them, he said, "Brother, truly Gudrun in her runes saith, 'Come'; but what meaneth this wolf's hair in the ring, save a warning that Atli is minded as a wolf toward us?" Gunnar hearkened not. Merry over the mead he sat and listened while the smooth-tongued Vingi told how Atli was grown old, how his young children could not ward the realm, and how the purport of the bidding was to make the Giukings rulers over all the land. Loud laughed Gunnar, carousing with the messengers, and he raised aloft the mead-horn and passed his word to go.

Hogni liked it not. He said: "Too rashly hast

thou pledged; but this being so, I will go with thee; yet very loth am I to the journey."

Many tokenings there were of ill. Hogni's wife, Kostbera, who was skilled in runes, perceived that some one had tampered with the letters upon Gudrun's ring, and this she told Hogni plainly. Moreover, Kostbera dreamed of a rushing river that broke through the mead hall, and of fire that burned the roof-tree; of a bear that overthrew the king's high seat, and of an erne that trampled women down and drenched them with warm blood. But Hogni made light of the dreams, or expounded them away in other fashion: for to none is it given to swerve from the fate shapen for him. In like manner Glaumvor, Gunnar's wife, told her lord what she had dreamed. She said: "Methought I saw thee thrust through with

they rowed across the sea-plain till they saw land, and brought the ship ashore; then leaped upon their steeds, and journeyed through the murky woodland. At last they came out into open country. In front they saw a mighty host of men which King Atli had arrayed, and heard from afar the clanging of their weapons. Fast were the burg gates and full of men; but the Giukings brake down the gates and came into the burg. Then spake Vingi: "How softly and with what sweet words did I beguile you hither! But now, tarry here a little, while I go and choose your gallows-tree." Hogni answered: "Little shall it avail thee to have beguiled us," and so saying cast Vingi to the ground, and slew him with the hammer of his axe.

Then rode they to the king's hall, where sat Atli with his men about him. Atli gave them no greeting, but said: "Deliver up Sigurd's gold; for it is Gudrun's portion, and long have I been minded to be lord thereof." Gunnar answered: "Thou shalt never have that gold; and if that be the purport of thy feast behold we are men of might, and shall not shrink to deal with thee in this matter."

Straightway uprose the king and his men, and fell upon the Giukings. The tables were overset, the mead-cups rolled upon the floor. Hot waxed the fighting in the hall, and quickly spread about the burg. Gudrun heard tidings of it, and flung off her mantle and ran into the battle. Tenderly she kissed both her dear brethren, and said: "Vain was my warning, for how shall a man

avoid his lot? But yet there is time to seek for peace." "Too late," they answered, "for blood is outpoured, and many sleep the sword-sleep." Then Gudrun put on a mail-coat and took a sword and fought beside her brethren, brave as they. Men fell fast on either side, and heaped the place with dead; the blood ran all about and mingled with the mead. Gunnar and Hogni went to and fro through Atli's folk, and wheresoever they went they reaped and men went down. At mid-day there was a lull in the battle; bitter was Atli's mind at the thinning of his host, yet still they were a host, the Giukings but a handful.

Then they fell to again. Atli cried on his men to drive the Giukings from the hall, and overwhelm them on the plain; but so hard the Giukings pressed on Atli's

Atli was very wroth, and spake to Hogni saying, "Now will I cut the heart out from thee before thine eyes, because by thy hand so many of my champions lie bereft of life." Hogni answered: "Do it, and thou shalt see a heart that never quailed." But one came to Atli and counselled him saying, "Let us rather take and put the thrall Hjalli to death: for naught else is he fit, and there is no ransoming to be gotten for him." When Hjalli the thrall heard this, he began to cry aloud, weeping and screaming and bewailing himself or ever he felt the point of the knife: for an evil and a bitter thing it seemed to him to be cut off forever from life and from the feeding of swine.

Hogni, hearing him shriek and yell, pleaded for the man's life, saying that he would blithely endure that or any other death himself, if thereby he might be delivered from the thrall's uproar. So for that time Hjalli's life was spared.

Then were Gunnar and Hogni led away to prison in their fetters, and put in dungeons apart the one from the other. And King Atli came to Gunnar in his prison, saying, "Tell me concerning Sigurd's gold, where thou hast hidden it, and I will spare thy life." Gunnar answered: "I will tell thee nothing unless I first behold the heart of Hogni my brother."

Atli's men went and laid hold of the thrall and cut the heart out of him, and brought it to King Gunnar. But when he saw it, Gunnar said, "That is a thrall's heart; it is the faint heart of Hjalli. See how it trembleth

now; yet not so much as when it dwelt within his breast."

Then went they unto Hogni in his prison. Hogni flinched not. Loud laughed he while they cut the heart from out of him, so that all wondered at the might of his manhood. They brought the heart to Gunnar, and he said, "That is a brave king's heart; it is the stout heart of Hogni my brother. Little it trembleth now; and less it trembled when it lay within his breast." Then Atli asked him, "Tell me now where is thy gold?" But Gunnar laughed him to scorn, saying, "While Hogni was yet alive I feared, between the two of us, lest the matter should leak out. Now, I alone know where the treasure is; and the secret is safe."

Then waxed King Atli very wroth, and he commanded

she had now none else to hold to but her husband, Atli deemed her heart was rightwise toward him. So when Gudrun would make a great funeral feast for her brethren, he hearkened gladly, and sent and summoned all his chief men from far and near to come to the mead hall. Very great and sumptuous he made that feast, for the glory of himself and of his kingdom. And after meat, when all sat drinking round the board, the king spake to Gudrun to fetch their children to the table, for he said, "It will gladden my heart to look upon the sons of thee and me while we make merry with the wine." She answered him, "Thy sons are here. Behold, their skulls are beakers at thy board; their blood is mingled with the wine which thou hast drunk; their hearts I roasted on a spit, and thou hast eaten thereof. So was I set to do thee as great shame as I might; yet in nowise shall the measure of thy deeds be full." Then the king grew sick at heart, and said, "Quick and bloody has been thy vengeance; but for this deed of thine most meet it were to stone thee and burn thy body on the bale fire." She answered, "For me another death is shapen, but see thou rather and foretell thine own."

Now Hogni had a son named Niblung. He came to the feast, the heart within him burning to requite his father's death; and Gudrun and he took counsel together how they might bring it about. So at night, when the king had well drunk and was gone up to his bed, they both came stealing into the chamber where he lay. Gudrun bare a sword in her hand, and Hogni's son

grasped both hand and hilt in his, and together they drave it into the king's breast. Awaking with the wound, King Atli cried, "Who art thou that hast done this deed?" There came the answer, "I, Gudrun, thrust somewhat with my hand; somewhat the son of Hogni thrust; and we are both avenged!" Then Atli besought her with his last breath, saying, "Now that the wrong between us has been fully requited, I pray thee do no despite unto my dead corpse, but make me a kingly funeral." When she had so promised him, King Atli died. And Gudrun did according to her word, for she and Hogni's son went out quickly and kindled the palace all about. Within were all the nobles and the mighty men of Atli's realm; and when they woke and felt the flames they ran hither and thither in their dis-

Jonakr's court. Swanhild was an exceeding fair woman, with eyes bright like her father's, so that few durst gaze up into them. And it came to pass that a certain King Jormunrek, hearing how she far excelled all other women as the sun outshines the stars of the firmament, sent by the hands of Randver his son, and Bikki his counsellor, seeking her in marriage. And Jonakr and Gudrun, thinking it an alliance of great honor, gave Swanhild to them to be Jormunrek's wife, and the maiden sailed away with them in their ship. But while they were upon the voyage Bikki counselled Randver the king's son, saying, "Why take so lovely a woman to that old man thy father to be his wife? More meet it were to woo her for thyself." And the saying pleased Randver; and with many sweet words he began to woo Swanhild; in like manner also she answered him again. Nevertheless as soon as they were come to land Bikki went to the king and said, "Truly a hard thing it is to speak evil of the king's son, and much it goeth against me; but Randver has altogether estranged away the love of Swanhild from thee, and has taken her to wife himself to thy great dishonoring." So Jormunrek's anger burned fiercely against his son, and he sent out straightway and had him hanged to a tree. Then by the counselling of Bikki was Swanhild bound hand and foot and led forth to the gate of the burg; and they brought wild horses and drave them at her to tread her down. But Swanhild looked upon the horses, and they shrank back because of the bright shining of her eyes; neither durst they come near

her till Bikki fetched a bag and drew it over her head; then the horses ran in and trampled her to death.

When Gudrun heard what had befallen, she went to her sons Hamdir and Saurli, saying, "What do ye here, rejoicing and making merry all the day? Rise up and go and avenge your sister upon Jormunrek the king!" But they dallied about and had no heart for the enterprise. Then Gudrun gave them strong drink from out of big flagons, and furnished them with weapons, and with coats of mail so cunningly fashioned that steel would not bite thereon. So they set forth on their errand; but on the way meeting Erp their brother, they asked him, "How wilt thou help us in this business?" And when he answered, "As hand helps hand, and as foot helps foot," they deemed lightly of his help, and turned

came there into the hall a certain old man, one-eyed and austere to look upon, who said, "Smite them with stones, so shall you bring these men to their end," and passed out; neither wist any whither he went. So they took up stones and stoned Hamdir and Saurli that they died.

Now Gudrun when she knew of it, went into the fore court of the palace, and sat musing how all her kindred, root and branch, were clean perished from off the face of the earth, and how she alone was left of all the Giukings. Heavily she called to mind the many things which she had suffered, and being tired of heart and very weary, she sorrowed not to feel death creep upon her. And at the last all the troubles of her latter days seemed blotted out, and her mind went back to Sigurd. She said, "O Sigurd, remember the pledge thou madest me when we were man and wife together. Now from thy sombre dwelling-place among the dead come forth and look on me a-dying: lift me in thy shadowy arms and bear me tenderly to Hel's pale kingdom!" So the words of her mourning had an end.

High they reared the oak pile, higher than any queen had heretofore: swift burned the fire and thawed her sorrow-bounden heart: black the smoke clouds rolled and billowed all along the sky.

THE GUDRUN LAY

By Sir George W. Cox and Eustace Hinton Jones

I

HAGEN AND THE GRIFFINS

SIGEBAND, King of Ireland, had an only son named Hagen, who grew up so hardy that at seven years of age he counted it shame to abide any longer among women-folk and children, and chose rather to handle a sword and spear with his father's men. And for all his fingers were so small that they could scarce close round

through the tree-branches, seized the boy in his great talons, and soared with him up into the air. Hagen's cries broke in upon the minstrelsy; the king and queen ran out from the hall, and looking up beheld their son in the griffin's claws. But while they yet stood watching, the griffin bore the boy high up among the clouds, and dwindled from their sight. Fast flew the monster, quicker than the wind; and Hagen, terror-stricken, looked down into the great deep beneath him. He saw the land slip by and his home grow far and faint; then they passed the coast; then on for a hundred miles aloft above the cold gray sea to a huge pile of bowldered rocks which dashed to spray the leaping waves that always roared upon them. The griffin wheeled above a pinnacle of the cliff, then hurtled swiftly down upon his nest and dropped his prey among his brood; then without lighting, skimmed the cliffs and soared again, and fled away to sea. Straightway the brood of griffins began fighting for the morsel of prey; for Hagen was in sooth no more than a morsel for the smallest of them. One of the wisest of the young monsters, while the rest were tearing each other with beak and talon, took up the boy in his claws and flew off with him to a tree hard by. Howbeit the bough whereon he perched brake with his weight, so that Hagen slipped from the griffin's claws, and tumbled to the ground. The boy scrambled to his feet and crept quickly away through the crannies of the rocks and hid himself. As soon as he was got over his fright and had begun to look about, he saw that he was come

into a great cleft between two sweating rock-sides, where of old the cliff had been rent asunder from beneath, and left a thread of sky above. But all below was like a garden for fern and creeping green. And as he walked along a winding pathway there, he came upon three lovely maidens who, like him, had been stolen away from home in childhood by the griffins, though by what means they had been delivered from death, save only by God's mercy, no man knows.

When these maidens saw Hagen, they ran in mortal fear and hid themselves in the cavern, thinking him some strange creature come to do them harm. But Hagen called aloud and besought them for pity's sake to give him food, for he was famished. So divining from his manner and speech that he must be one of their own

rocks. Afterward, when the fury of the storm was spent, the sea yet all a-work with foam and heaving at ebb-tide, Hagen climbed down the cliffs, and peering about, saw the sand strewn with corpses, and how ever and anon the griffins came and carried them off to feed their brood. He espied how one of the bodies was the corpse of a knight clad in armor, having a sword belted at the waist; and beside it there lay a bow and a quiver full of arrows. Then watching till the griffins were gone off again with their prey, he made haste and came down, stripped off the knight's armor and put it on, girt on the sword and took the bow in hand. Just then one of the griffins came hovering overhead, and Hagen let fly a shaft at him, but it bounded off the creature's hide, and fell harmless to the ground. The griffin darted on the youth, but he avoided its clutch, and turning drew his sword and with one blow smote off a wing of the monster; and when the griffin sought to tear him with his talons, Hagen cut off his paws, and soon after slew him. Erewhile came the other griffin with all the brood, and these all beset Hagen behind and before and on all sides, insomuch that the maidens, who watched from the cliff, gave him up for lost. But his victory over the first griffin made him the more valiant, and he dealt so many blows that his sword could not be seen, but only a flash and glitter that played round about him like lightning; and before long he laid every one of the griffins dead upon the sand.

Hagen became so skilful with the bow that he could

shoot a bird upon the wing, or a fish as it darted in the sea. Once as he rambled over the island he slew an unknown monster that breathed fire and smoke when it came ravening at him from a gloomy cavern. And Hagen having by chance tasted of the creature's blood felt it strengthen him. So he drank his fill thereof, and it entered into his sinews and gave him thenceforward the strength of twelve strong men; moreover his voice grew loud and terrible, so that he could make himself heard above the roar of the surf upon the rocks. Soon after, Hagen met a lion in the wood, and he lifted up his voice and shouted at him, and the lion fled in terror at the noise. But Hagen following, caught the lion alive with his hands, muzzled him, and bound up his claws with strips of bark. Then he took the beast upon his

ship. No ship came. They built a watch-fire on the highest peak, and kept it burning night and day through storm and sunshine; but far as one could look there was nothing save the round sea and the drooping clouds, the drooping clouds and the round heaving sea. No ship came.

One hot, bright summer day, the throbbing blue sea lay white-fringed on the yellow sands, murmuring slumbrously. The cliffs quivered in the haze of the sun. The maidens looked and saw a sail; and they ran and told Hagen; and they were all glad, for they saw the ship steer toward them.

It was a certain Yarl that sailed with his men in search of booty, and he saw the island and made for it; but when he perceived three maidens on the beach clad in strange attire, he feared to land, thinking them sea-women, till Hagen lifted up his mighty voice and told who and what they were, and asked that seemly garments for them might be sent ashore. Thereupon the Yarl chose out the best raiment to be found in the ship, and rowed therewith to land in a little boat with twelve of his men. And after the maidens had come back from behind a thicket whither they went to clothe themselves, he marvelled at their beauty, and persuaded them to go on board the ship with Hagen. There he set meat before them, and made a feast of the best that he had. And after that the Yarl would know concerning their history. So the eldest of the maidens told him that she was an Indian princess who had been carried off by the

griffin; the second said that she was the daughter of the King of Portugal; and the third, that she was a noble lady of Ireland. But, when they told him who Hagen was, and how he had slain the griffins, the Yarl's heart sank within him; for Sigeband King of Ireland, Hagen's father, was an enemy of his, and he bethought him straightway to avenge himself upon the son, yet feared the might of the man who had slain the griffins and their brood.

Hagen perceived the Yarl whispering with his men and presently caught them trying to steal away his weapons. Thereat being angered, he asked fiercely what was meant. And the Yarl spake, saying, "I have suffered great and grievous wrongs at the hands of King Sigeband and his knights, and now, since thou art his

foot with sail cord, and flung him in the bottom of the ship.

After this Hagen cried to the mariners, "Come forth, you dogs! Come, bend to the oars! And if the steersman be alive, let him now steer for Ireland." Never a man disobeyed him. They sat them down at the oar-banks and the steersman steered; and on the seventeenth day they sighted the green shores of Ireland; but the mariners feared greatly to come to land, lest King Sigeband should put them all to death. Then Hagen said, "Fear not; for I will send you all to bear the message to my father that his son has come. Be of good cheer: kings do not slay the bearers of glad tidings."

When the messengers came to King Sigeband he would not believe them, nor would he even let his knights go down to the sea beach to find if the tidings were true; for he deemed it an idle tale that his son could be yet alive after being carried away by a ravenous monster of the air so many years ago. But the mariners went to Queen Uta and told her; and she believed, and went straightway to the ship and welcomed Hagen, and brought him to his father. And even then King Sigeband could scarce for joy believe that it was his very own son.

After this, Hagen released the Yarl from his bonds, and finding that he had been unjustly treated caused restitution to be made to him in full for all his losses, and made peace with him. Then Hagen took to wife the Indian princess, and after King Sigeband's death, Hagen reigned in his stead and became one of the mightiest

kings of the earth. And he made noble ladies of the two other maidens whom he brought with him out of captivity, and they wedded two of his dukes.

II

HILDA'S WOOING

WHEN Hettel, the young king of Denmark, but newly crowned, was minded to take him a wife, he sent and gathered together his high vassals and lieges to his palace in Hegelingen to give him counsel. And Morung of Nifland said to the king: "There is one maiden that for comeliness surpasseth all others in the world: that is Hilda, daughter of wild Hagen King of Ireland; and she

But when Yarl Wate was come before the king, and understood what was required of him, he was but ill-pleased, and said: "I ween Horant and Frute to have counselled thee in this, and to have done in no friendly wise toward me. Howbeit I am not the man to pick an enterprise that hath no peril in it. I will go. But since Horant and Frute esteem my life so lightly, they shall go likewise." Then Yrolt of Ortland and Morung said: "It is well spoken; and inasmuch as it behoveth none to hang back when brave men take their lives in their hands, we also will go with them."

So the king made ready a great ship of cypress wood, in fashion like a dragon. It was all aglow with golden scales; the anchor was of silver, and the steering paddle overlaid with gold. Within he furnished it abundantly with victual for the voyage, with armor and raiment, and presents of great price. Then Yarl Wate and Morung, Horant and Frute and Yrolt, entered into the ship with seven hundred of their men. They drew aloft the embroidered sail; a fair wind arose and bore them out of harbor. For many days they tilled the barren sea-fields, until weary of sea toil they saw the welcome land, and steered in for Castle Balian, where Hagen the king kept court.

Being come to shore, Horant and Yrolt took precious jewels in their hands worth many thousand marks, and leaving their men hidden in the ship, came to King Hagen, saying, "Behold we have voyaged from a far country where we have heard of thy fame, and we pray

thee take these presents at our hands." Hagen looked at the jewels and marvelled at their great worth. He said, "What kings are ye, and whence have you come with all this treasure?" Horant answered, saying, "Banished folk are we. Hast thou not heard of Hettel, who is king in Hegelingen, and of his might and majesty, of the battles he has fought and the riches he has gathered together? He despiseth such as we, and being well befriended careth nothing for his men. Wherefore a few of us, weary of his overbearing ways, have left him seeking service." Then said Hagen, "Ye shall abide with me"; and he commanded to make ready lodgings for them in the city.

But Horant and Yrolt gave gold away so lavishly to all within the city that the people said, "Of a truth these must be the richest kings of the earth." And the fair Hilda hearing of it desired greatly to see these strangers; wherefore her father bade them to a feast. The Danish knights came at his bidding, arrayed most sumptuously. And the feast being over, and the wine outpoured, the queen and Hilda left the table, desiring that the guests might be brought to them in the inner chamber. First Yarl Wate went in, a huge and burly man, with a great rough beard and brawny hands. But when the queen bade him sit between her and the princess he blushed and stammered, and then blundered shamefaced to the seat. "Thou art strangely ill at ease in company of ladies," said the queen. "Aye, mistress," said Yarl Wate, "I am not over smooth of tongue. I am not

skilled to lisp about the weather. What shall I say? This seat is soft enough. I never mind me to have sat so soft before, nor to have wrought so hard in doing it. By my life, good ladies!" he cried upstarting, "a good day's battle with a brisk enemy never wearied me so much, or made me deem myself so great a fool." Hilda and her mother laughed pleasantly at his bluff behavior, and sought to put him at his ease; but Wate would have no more; he strode off to the hall among the king and his men, and in an hour or so became himself again. For the king won on him. Hagen's big voice, his battle knowledge, and his love of fight, opened Yarl Wate's heart, and the two were soon made friends. But for the women, there was none in their esteem like the sweet-voiced Horant. He was fair to look upon as a woman, yet had no lack of courage in the battle time. His wit was quick; and when he talked his face was in a glow at sight of the strange pictures in his mind, whereby he likened things to one another in curious sort, so that all which heard him wondered and were glad.

Now Hagen spake much with Wate concerning sword play, and the mystery thereof. So presently Yarl Wate besought the king to appoint him a master of fence to teach him a little of it, because fencing after their manner was a thing in which he was little learned. Then King Hagen sent for the best fence master that he had, and set him to teach Yarl Wate the rules of sword play. But quickly losing patience at the long list of early rules which the fence master laid down, Hagen caught the foil

from out his hands crying, "Away with you! Why all this stuff? In four strokes I will teach this man to use a sword." So the king fell to with Wate, whom, however, he very soon found an exceeding skilful master of fence. Thereat being somewhat angry, he struck in fiercely; and they both carried on the sport till the buttons flew off the foils; yet neither gat the better of the other. Then Hagen throwing down his foil cried, "In sooth, never saw I youth learn so quickly." And Yrolt said, "There is very little wherein the serving men of our lord's country are not already learned."

So as Yarl Wate and his fellows abode continually at the king's court and feasted with him every day, it befell once on a time, when night was past and the day had begun to dawn, that Horant arose and tuned his voice to a song. The birds, waking in the hedges, had begun to sing, but hearing music sweeter than theirs, they held their peace. Ever higher and sweeter Horant lifted his song till it rang about the palace; and all the sleepers dreamed of Baldur and his home in Ganzblick in the sky. Soon they woke; nor were they sorry to lose their dreams at hearing Horant's song. Hagen heard it and rose up from his bed. Hilda and her maidens heard it, and arose. Men and women came thronging to thank the singer; but when they came the song was done. Yet none the more would the birds begin their lays; they had lost their notes from wonder. Then Hilda besought her father that by any means he should constrain Horant to sing again. And Hagen being no less crazed with

the song, recked not for aught else, and he promised the singer a thousand pounds of gold by weight if he would sing again at eve.

At evening Horant sang. The people filled the hall and flocked about the castle for a great space. The sick came thither and remembered their pains no more. The beasts in the forest and the cattle in the fields left their food; the worms forgat to go in the grass, and the fishes left swimming in the sea. And when the song was done and the folk went their ways, they heard the minster choirs and the chiming of the bells, but took no more pleasure in them.

Hilda sent twelve purses of gold to Horant, entreating him to come and sing to her in her chamber. The singer came and sang the song of Amile, the like whereof no man had ever heard save on the wild flute. No gold was ever so good. The maiden laid her hand within the singer's and bade him choose whatever he listed for a song-gift. He said, "I pray thee give me but the girdle from thy waist, that I may take it to my master." She asked, "Who is thy master?" He answered, "No banished men are we, but servants of Hettel, king of Denmark, come to woo thee for his bride." Then Hilda said, "So thou couldst always sing to me at morn and eve, I would not care whose bride I were." Horant said, "Lady, within my master's courts abide twelve minstrels, better far than I; and yet with all the sweetness of their singing my lord sings best of all." And Hilda said, "If that be so, I fain would follow thee and

be King Hettel's bride. But I know not how. My father will give me to no suitor with his goodwill. I would go but I durst not. Horant answered her, "Since thou wouldst, be it ours to dare. We ask no more."

Then Horant and his comrades got ready their ship for sea, and afterward they came to Hagen, saying, "The time for our departure draweth nigh, and we must sail to other lands. But before we go, we pray you bring the queen and your fair daughter, that they may see the treasures which we have within the ship." So on the next day, after mass, King Hagen came down to the beach, with his queen, and the fair Hilda and her maids; with them went a thousand good knights of Ireland. The ship was swung to a single cable, the anchor aboard, the sail tackle free. Upon the sands were spread the Danish treasure chests, filled with costly raiment embroidered with gold and jewels. There was a crowding round the chests to see; Yarl Wate was there, and Frute, and Horant; and in the crowding Hilda was parted from her mother. Hagen and his knights saw nothing for the crowd, and the queen forgot her daughter at beholding the glories of the raiment. But suddenly they heard a shout, and looking up beheld Yarl Wate leap on the bulwarks with fair Hilda in his arms; the next moment Horant and Frute sprang on board with two other maidens. Yrolt smote at the cable with his axe; it parted. The sail was hauled aloft, and twenty oars shot out from either side to lift the ship along.

Hagen and his knights ran quickly down into the sea; but the rowers rowed hard, and armed men in the ship arose, seven hundred strong, and laid about them. Short was the fight, and soon the vessel reached deep water. Loud laughed the Danes to see on the fading shore the angry crowd, the weeping queen, and Hagen raging like a madman, up to his waist in the sea.

Fast sped the ship and the wind was fair. The Danes made Hegelingen in ten days, and Hettel was wed to Hilda with great joy.

But while they yet sat at the marriage feast Hagen's war-ship bore down upon their coast. Quickly the Danes rose from the tables, put their armor on, and ran down to the shore. Hagen drave his ship upon the sand, and leaped into the water with his men. A shower of arrows thick as hail was his greeting. Hettel rushed foremost to withstand him. There was fierce fighting between the two for a little space; then Hettel fell, sore wounded; and over his body Hagen and his knights pressed on and hewed their way to land. Fast fell the men, both Danes and Irelanders. Then Yarl Wate encountered Hagen; and the battle anger fell on both the men; they fought like wild beasts of the wood, till, Wate being wounded on the head, Hagen's war-pike brake at the next blow he struck. Meantime the battle raged furiously. The Irelanders kept their footing, but could not drive back the Danish men; the numbers slain on either hand were equal, man for man. Then Hettel's wounds being bound up, the Danish king cried out to

Hagen, "Of what avail shall it be to you or me to fight this battle out? For every man of mine that falls a man of thine goes down. When it is done there will be an end to Danes and Irelanders alike. But if thou must needs prolong the fight, I will now meet thee, and if Hilda weeps for a dead husband she shall mourn a dead father too." Then Hagen cast down his sword, and called off his men. And he said Hettel, "Give me thy hand; for in sooth my child has married a brave man; and had I half a score more daughters they should all come to Hegelingen." So the kings made peace together. And the marriage feast was all begun again, and kept for twelve days in King Hettel's palace. Moreover a wise woman brought forth herbs and roots, and healed the warriors of their wounds. And after the feasting, Hagen and his men were loaded with gifts, and they entered into their ship and departed to Ireland.

III

GUDRUN'S LOVERS

Kings have not always the fairest children; but Gudrun and her brother Ortwin, the children of King Hettel and Queen Hilda, were the comeliest in all Denmark. Words fail to tell how fair was Gudrun; but they which beheld her beauty felt as though the stars had shone upon them. Many came from far countries a wooing her, among them King Siegfried of the Moor-

land, with a great train bearing rich presents; but King Hettel sent him haughtily away. So Siegfried's anger was kindled against the king of Denmark, and he went back raging to his own land.

Tidings of Gudrun's beauty came to Hartmuth, the young prince of the Normans, son of King Ludwig, and he fell into a great love-sickness because of her; and choosing out sixty noble knights he arrayed them in the richest mail, and laded them with gold and precious stuffs, and sent them on an embassy to ask her in marriage. But King Hettel and his queen spake disdainfully to the messengers, and sent them away. So these returned into Normandy, and came to their master. And Hartmuth said, "Tell me truly, is the maiden so fair as men have said?" And they answered him, "Sire, a hundred days we spent upon the journey home, and since we left King Hettel's court we have seen strange things by sea and land. But we cannot remember them, for naught save Gudrun's image dwells upon our eyes, as when a man has looked upon the sun at noon and seen him burn." Then Hartmuth sware that he would never rest till he had won this maiden's love; and he took his journey to Denmark that he might look upon her. He came as an unknown guest, and Hettel gave him stranger's welcome at his table. When Hartmuth beheld Gudrun, he saw that his knights had not told him the half of her beauty, and being consumed with love for her, so that he could no longer hold his peace, he called one of her maidens privily, saying, "Go, tell Gudrun I am Hartmuth of

thought to come back and w
of the sword; yet, loving he
wifehood, he forbore.

Now Herwig, prince of 2
mark a-wooing of Gudrun, an
he spake to King Hettel to
wife. And when King Hette
at his suit, as he had done a
within himself, "This man is
pride; let us see whether of t
of Denmark or I of Zealand"
in his mind, went straightway
gathered together his host, and
Hettel and besieged him in
When Hettel, King of Denma
ard, and knew that he was come
said, "Truly this is a worthy m
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nigh as a son already;" and Hettel laced on his ring mail and went out to fight him. Long raged the battle on the plain, but Herwig's knights pushed so hard upon the Danish host that they drave them back for many a furlong mounded with slain; till being hotly pressed against the walls, the Danes turned in panic and rushed, a wild disordered rabble, for the castle gates. Furious at being borne back by the press, King Hettel brake his way through till he encountered Herwig, and then so fierce a battle began that both armies paused to see.

From a window in the castle Gudrun had watched how Herwig smote down the stoutest of her father's knights, and as she watched her eye kindled and her cheek flushed at the glory of the man who fought for her. But no sooner did she see the deadly combat between her father and Herwig than she seized a shield and ran out from the castle and threw herself between the warriors. "Father, for my sake," Gudrun said. "And you, Sir Herwig, prithee answer me. For my sake also will you make the peace?" And Herwig answered, "If for your sake means all things henceforward for your sake, right gladly will I." Gudrun looked upon the frank, brave face of her warrior, and loved him as he stood there on the battle-plain. And she said, "So be it as thou hast said." Then the warriors laid down their weapons, and King Hettel joined their hands, saying, "I desire no better man to be my son-in-law." And Gudrun said to Herwig, "Thee and no other will I have to be my mate, and I will dwell with thee all the days

of my life." So plighted they their troth upon the battlefield; and after that a feast was held for many days within the castle.

And when the festivity was done, Herwig would have taken Gudrun to wife straightway, but her mother, Queen Hilda, said, "Nay, for her dowry is not yet prepared, and it will take time to make ready a wedding feast fit for a king's daughter. Is she not yours? Be content and wait a little; there is no hurry, and Gudrun is very young." So Herwig was fain to go back to Zealand with a heavy heart for company. But lagging months make lingering years.

Tidings came to Siegfried, King of the Moorland, how Gudrun hath given her troth to Herwig, prince of Zealand, and being fiercely wroth thereat he said, "I shall kindle him a marriage-torch which shall set his land aflame and make Zealand Fireland, for I will altogether consume it and burn it from the seas." So he sailed across the seaways with twenty wide-breasted ships; and he turned loose his host of Moormen upon Zealand and ravaged it with fire and sword. Herwig and his people fought fiercely, but Siegfried drave them back and pushed forward over the bodies of many that counted it sweeter to die upon their land than to yield it. And at last Siegfried and his host overran all the country, save only one strong fortress wherein Herwig and his knights were besieged. Howbeit, Herwig contrived to send a trusty messenger into Denmark, who came to King Hettel in his castle at Hegelingen, and told him of Herwig's

extremity. Then King Hettel quickly gathered his warriors together to go and help him. And with the king came also Gudrun's brother, Ortwin, bearing his maiden sword, and Yarl Wate his master; there likewise followed Yrolt, Horant, and the graybeard Frute, and a host of redoubtable champions. And these all took ship, and coming with speed to Zealand, they fought with Siegfried and overcame him; and with the scourge of swords they scourged the Moormen from the land, and burned their ships, and shut Siegfried up within a rocky castle with water round about on every hand. Then King Hettel and his army pitched before the castle to beleaguer it. And Hettel vowed a vow never to rise up from before the walls till Siegfried should yield.

Now there came certain men into Normandy which spake to Hartmuth after this manner: "Behold, Hettel with all his doughtiest warriors has left Denmark and besieges Siegfried in a castle in Zealand, neither will he stay his hand till Siegfried yields; and the fortress is so strong and well victualled that it can hold out for a year at least. Wherefore what hinders now from falling upon Denmark and gaining Gudrun for your bride?" Hartmuth turned this counsel over in his mind, but liked it not. He said, "Love hinders. Can the sword make love? Will conquest make unwilling love more willing?" But Queen Gerlinda, his mother, said to him, "Thou fool: did not Herwig with his good sword win her love? And shall worse fortune follow yours? This is no soft smirking maid to sigh and prate about, but a grand war-

woman, whose frame is stirred already with the blood of the heroes whom she will bear. Go, fight and win her: conquer her and she will glory in you; for such women glory more in such defeats than men in victory." So by these and many other subtle speeches being over-persuaded, Hartmuth sailed with his father King Ludwig and all his army across the sea-plain till he came to the shores of Denmark, and saw shining in the sun the white towers of Castle Matalan wherein fair Gudrun and the queen kept court. When Hartmuth gat to land he hid his warriors in the shelter of a wood, and sent two of his noblest yarls to the castle to entreat Gudrun with fair words to give him her love. But Gudrun answered, "Go again to Hartmuth and say that I have plighted my troth to Herwig, and so long as I live I shall love none other." When Hartmuth heard these words he was very angry, and he blew the trumpet and set his host in array, and came up against Castle Matalan and brake down the castle gates and put the guards to the sword. In the great hall of the castle sat Gudrun, her cheeks white with anger but not with fear. Hartmuth bowed himself before her and said, "Fair Gudrun, I repent me of all, saving only of my love." And when for a long time she answered him never a word, he besought her to have compassion on his love and speak with him. She told him, "I am Gudrun, and I change not." So being wroth because of her steadfastness he no longer hindered his men from pillaging the castle. And they took Gudrun and thirty of her maidens and carried them off cap-

tive to King Ludwig's ship where Hartmuth was, and put out to sea and sailed away.

Men came to Gudrun's father and Herwig as they were besieging Siegfried in his castle in Zealand, and told what had happened in Denmark. Then the king's heart was exceeding heavy because of the oath which he sware; and he bewailed his lot, and all his warriors lamented aloud the cruel fate which had befallen them. Then spake Yarl Wate, "It is meet for warriors to blot out grief with blood, not tears. Come, let us now hotly beset Siegfried within his fortress, and drive him to make peace. So, having kept our vow we shall be free to avenge this greater wrong." And the king said, "It is well spoken"; and with one accord they made so fierce an assault upon the castle that Siegfried was fain to sally out and fight. The battle endured the whole day, and great numbers were slain on either side. At nightfall Yrolt came to the castle wall and asked a parley. He said, "King Hettel will make peace if Siegfried does him friendly homage and holds himself at his command for service." Siegfried answered, "War will never conquer us, but peace will save a host of lives. Wherefore we are willing." Then Siegfried and all his knights lifted up their hands and sware to do warlike service to King Hettel as their liege; and so they made the peace. And when this was done Hettel opened his heart to Siegfried and spake of what had befallen Gudrun. Then Siegfried made friends with Herwig and said, "We were foes before for Gudrun's sake, but now for her sake we will

make common cause against Hartmuth. Had you not burned my ships we might have quickly started on our errand." Howsoever, it chanced that a great company of pilgrims were just then come to land, and Hettel and Siegfried seized on their ships and entered into them, both they and their men, and put out to sea in search of Hartmuth.

Now Hartmuth and his father were sailing in their warships bearing Gudrun away in captivity. They plowed the salt sea-fields many days till they came to an island called Wulpensand. There they landed to rest them from sea-weariness. And one day as they looked out seaward they descried a pilgrim fleet with great red crosses blazoned on the sails. But as the ships drew near, seeing the glitter of helm and shield and bright spear-points flashing in the sun, straightway every man seized sword and javelin, and put his armor on. Ludwig and Prince Hartmuth shouted their battle-cry and ranged their host upon the beach.

King Hettel, with Siegfried his ally, and Herwig and Ortwin, ran their ships upon the sand a bow-shot off the shore, and leaped into the sea to fight their way through all the host that met them in the water. With cry and shout they roused themselves to battle fury. Hettel was fighting for his child, Herwig for his bride, and Ortwin for his sister. Fiercely the two hosts met; the air grew dark with hurtling spears; the din of war rose high above the wave-noise: the sea lapped blood upon the shingly beach. Yarl Wate was first ashore; for when King

Ludwig hurled his mighty spear at him, Wate held his shield like a rock ; so the point stuck therein, and scarcely had the tough ash shaft been shattered with the quiver of the blow, ere Wate threw himself upon King Ludwig, and flung him reeling down, and so gat foot on land. The battle lasted through the day ; night fell and the tumult ceased ; yet not because either host was vanquished, but since both were fain to rest. At dawn King Hettel and King Ludwig fought a mortal strife, and King Hettel gat his death-wound ; but still the old Dane fought on until he dropped, and dying he called upon his daughter's name. Then raged Yarl Wate about the battlefield, terrible in his fury as a wild best of prey, for he loved his master Hettel. And the Normans feared his anger and the vengeance of the Danes. Many a Norman champion had been stricken down that day, and when night fell they that slept in death on either side outnumbered the living who lay down to rest. Far upon the plain the watch-fires marked the camps of either host. Day brake, and a mist lay thick on land and sea. The Danes waited for their enemies, and went hither and thither seeking them, but only stumbled on the slain. They came to the Norman camp ; the watch-fires smoldered still, but no man was by them, for in the night the Normans had betaken themselves to their ships and had carried off Gudrun and her women and sailed away ; and the fog covered them from sight. Loud was the clamor of the Danes, and fierce the wrath of Yarl Wate as a lion's robbed of prey. " We cannot follow

them," said Frute bitterly; "with this fair wind they are full ten leagues away, and we are now too few to venture on another chase." So they made a mound of the slain, and buried together friend and foe, earth-covered, on a windy ness, and gat them heavy-hearted to their ships, and made sail for Denmark. But when they reached Queen Hilda's castle all feared to tell of that which had befallen them. The queen came out to greet them and to welcome home her lord the king. And when all held their peace, Yarl Wate stood forward, and bravely he outspake: "Many years have I eaten of the king's meat. I have served him through field and flood, and how shall I lie to Hettel's queen? Gudrun is yet a captive. Hettel is slain, and with him the most part of our bravest knights are dead in Wulpensand." Then the queen covered her face, and went up into her chamber to weep. Many a strong knight lifted up his voice and wept. But Wate said: "Tears will not bring the dead back, nor rescue Gudrun. It is true there are but a handful of us left, but let us teach our boys to grow up and hate the Normans, and let us train their hands to war, and wait with patience for the reckoning day."

Meanwhile the Norman ships made a fair voyage. And when land was sighted, King Ludwig called for Gudrun to show her the sun shining upon the green pastures and woodlands of Normandy. "Behold," said he, "the land whereof thou shalt be queen." Hartmuth stood a little apart to hear how she would answer. Gudrun said: "I will never be queen of Normandy; I will

never be Hartmuth's wife. How should I wed the son of him that slew my father?" Then said Ludwig, "Choose between queen and bond-slave, whether of the twain you list?" Gudrun answered: "I have no choice, nor any mind for choice. My troth I pledged to Herwig, and nothing can ever part me from my troth." Then waxed King Ludwig very wroth, and he caught the maiden by her long hair, and swung her overboard, saying fiercely, "Death be thy groomsman and the sea thy priest!" But Hartmuth leaped into the water, and dived down until he saw the glitter of her golden hair, upbore her in his arms from the depths into the light again, and gave her to her women. And Hartmuth was very angry with his father because he had done this thing.

Now Queen Gerlinda had prepared a royal greeting for Gudrun, and sought to dazzle her with the splendor of the court. Arrayed in richest robes of gold embroidery she rode forth on a palfrey from the castle gates, with all the noblest knights of Normandy in her train. Beside her rode fair Ortrun, Hartmuth's sister, whose simple heart felt woman's tenderness toward a prisoner for love's sake. And when Ortrun saw Gudrun she ran and took her hand and kissed her. Never a word spake either woman, but the two were friends henceforward from that hour. Then with haughty courtesy the Queen Gerlinda stooped to kiss the captive, but Gudrun turned her reddened cheek away in sudden pride, saying, "Gerlinda's kisses would lie harder on me than my wrongs." Gerlinda made as though she heard not, but she kept

hat saying in her heart. With feasting and dance, with
nusic and with knightly games, Hartmuth sought to be-
uile Gudrun of her sorrows; but she had no mind for
eguilement, neither would she hearken to his wooing.
And in those days Gudrun knew no comfort save when
he might lay her head on Ortrun's gentle breast, and
here weep out the griefs which she bore dry-eyed before
he rest. Ortrun would soothe and hush the stronger
oman as a mother lulls her nursling from its pain.

Months passed and Hartmuth longed for Gudrun's
ove, yet he refrained from importunity, because her peace
as dear to him. So he watched and waited, thinking she
night change, and lived on hope that each day would
ring some word or look in earnest of a change. And
hen none came, his heart grew sick from hope deferred.

red with my father's blood. How shall I do this wickedness, and break my troth, and break my heart, and bring disgrace upon my kinsfolk?" Loftily she left them, the red anger mounting to her cheek. Then said Hartmuth bitterly, "Always the same: scorn and hard words. Mother, I will forget this woman; I will go away; and when far off, will feed my memory only with her unkindness." Then, since the violence of his unrequited love was chilled, his heart became a thought more tender to her womanhood, and he said: "Do with her as you will when I am gone; only treat her kindly, as becometh a king's daughter, remembering that she has suffered many things already because of us."

So Hartmuth set out in quest of knightly adventures. But no sooner was he gone than Queen Gerlinda came to Gudrun, saying, "Now, you despiser of the love of a prince and the kisses of a queen, I shall shortly break your stubborn will. You, who count Ludwig's throne too low to satisfy your pride—how say you if I send you down among the scullions to scour and scrub with base-born drudges?" But though Gudrun's cheek whitened, she answered straightly, "Do with me as you will; I am in your hands; all that you lay upon me that will I strive to bear, but nothing shall ever break my troth." Then the queen took Gudrun and stripped off her courtly raiment, and clad her in rags, and set her to drudge in the kitchen. With her also her thirty maidens, who were all dukes' daughters, were made to do the like; and they gathered sticks and made the fires, and cleaned the pots

and kettles, and scrubbed the floors, and did all the foulest work in the castle; and if a filthier task could be found for one than for another, it was given to Gudrun. And their meat was beggars' fare. Thus for three years toiled Gudrun among the scullions, during all which time Ortrun was forbidden to go near her; but often Queen Gerlinda would come and mock her as she toiled, asking whether she found court life to her mind. Yet Gudrun meekly endured, saying only, "A constant heart for love's sake makes malice easy to be borne."

Now when three years were over Hartmuth came back, having gained great renown for his valorous exploits in far countries. He had never ceased thinking of Gudrun. He remembered not her unkindness, but only his love; and in the tournament and the battle her

forget you, but in vain; for I can love no other woman." Gudrun said: "These hardships are less hard than your entreaties. My troth is given, and my mind can never change." Being vexed he said: "Did I not seek you over land and sea? Have I not, all these years, dared all things for your sake? Your very life belongs to me who snatched it from the wave; yet you spurn me. Is this a fit reward for deeds like these?" Gudrun answered, "You snatched me from all that I hold dear—home, kindred, and the man for whom alone I would leave both. You brought my father to his death. For which of these good deeds should I reward you?" Whereat, losing patience, Hartmuth said in a rage, "Drudge on among the drudges then! My mother was not far wrong if this be still your temper." So he left her there to slave. But do what he might Hartmuth could not help loving Gudrun, and after a while he went to his sister Ortrun, saying, "Dear sister, intercede for me with Gudrun. She has borne much and long: wherefore do you take her up out of the kitchen and clothe her in seemly raiment, and let her dwell with you in your bower. Comfort her, and make amends for what she has suffered, and seek to turn her mind toward me; for if cruelty will not soften her heart, perchance kindness may."

At these words Ortrun rejoiced greatly, for she had grieved heavily at being separated from Gudrun, and bewailed her cruel lot with many tears. So for a long space henceforth Gudrun dwelt with Ortrun, and Ortrun

comforted her, and they loved each other as sisters. Very sweetly Ortrun prayed Gudrun that Hartmuth might find favor in her eyes; for indeed she loved her brother and admired him with a sister's pride, neither could she understand how he could be displeasing in the sight of any woman. And she pleaded yet the more earnestly, fearing lest worse things might be in store for Gudrun if she still turned a deaf ear to his suit. But Gudrun always told her that she could never break her troth to Herwig. Long after Ortrun knew this, she yet contrived delay, and put her brother off, saying, "Wait a little; see what another month will do." Thus more than a year slipped by, till Hartmuth's mother urging him, he would wait no longer. Then once more he entreated Gudrun for his love's sake, to give him hers.

to harder tasks than before. She was sent daily to the sea-shore to wash clothes from daybreak till dark, and punished with ill words and blows if the full tale of her task was not accomplished. Gudrun murmured not, neither for the hard labor, to which she had never before been used, nor for the harder sayings which the Queen continually cast in her teeth. Gudrun set herself so steadfastly to her work that before long no woman in the land could wash clothes whiter than she. All Gudrun's maidens remained faithful to her, and to their land, save one, Heregard by name, who being beguiled by the king's cup-bearer went away and abode with him, and grew hard of heart, and jeered alike at the sorrows and the constancy of her mistress. But for the rest, their hearts were like to break at seeing the hard tasks which Gudrun did so meekly; and the fairest of them all, named Hildeburg, who was daughter of a prince, spake openly to the queen of her cruelty. Enraged at this, Gerlinda sent Hildeburg also to the sea-shore to wash with Gudrun. But this was just what Hildeburg wanted, and she rejoiced greatly in her mind at being able to share the toils of her mistress. With her pleasant talk she cheered Gudrun's heart and lightened her labor, so that the long weary days passed quicker. And though they had to trudge daily through the deep snow to their work on the sea-shore, bearing their heavy burdens of linen, Gudrun was greatly comforted by Hildeburg; and she would often stop her work for a moment to put her arms round Hildeburg's neck,

saying, while the tears stood in her eyes, "God reward thee, Hildeburg, for all thy faithful love." And Hildeburg would answer with a smile and kiss, "I have my reward to be with thee."

Time sped with Gudrun at her toils, till since the battle on the Wulpensand many a spring had come and gone, and many an autumn had yielded up its golden grain. Seedlings of King Hettel's time grew up and blossomed and bare fruit; saplings had grown young trees; and Danish boys, trained by Yarl Wate in hatred of the Normans, were grown up stalwart men, swift javelin throwers, strong wielders of the sword, with all the mind to put their vengeance in their fingers.

Year by year Queen Hilda had set the smiths of Denmark to make javelin heads, and sword blades, and ring mail. These she stored up in Hegelingen against the reckoning day; and she commanded her shipwrights to build seven great dragon ships of war and two and twenty smaller ships to be ready against that day. Queen Hilda had long given Gudrun up, thinking in truth that Hartmuth had forced her to wed with him. But she wanted vengeance for her lord King Hettel; and there was scarce a woman in Denmark that did not cry likewise for vengeance for a husband or a brother or a son. So all those years mothers suckled their babes to war, gave bows and spears for playthings to their boys, and trained them to a hardy life, and patiently waited for the day.

At last, gray old Yrolt said to the queen, "The day

has come." A glad woman was the queen; and straightway gathered she her vassals together, Yarl Wate and Morung and Frute and Horant, with all their warriors; and she sent and fetched Herwig out of Zealand. Ortwin was a-rivering with his hawks when the messengers came to him. Blithely he loosed the jesses from the birds, took off their hoods and let them fly, saying, "Now I have a better quarry!"

When all was ready the ships set sail. Many Danish women were there to see. Fiercely they rejoiced, because the day had come.

Yarl Wate steered first for Wulpensand. And as they drew near the island, a storm arose and the winds blew; and ever there came upon the wind a sound of grievous moaning and lamentation from the spirits of the slain; for the dead Danes lay restless in their graves. Wherefore as soon as the storm had abated, the warriors landed, and passed many days upon Wulpensand, watching about the mound, communing with the voices on the wind, and praying for rest for the souls of their kinsfolk. Each night, for nine nights, they kindled the bale fire, and watched thereby till dawn.

One day, as Gudrun and Hildeburg were washing linen on the beach, they saw something like a white swan, which seemed to rise up from where the red sun sank into the golden sea. But as it drew nigh to them they perceived that it was a sea-maiden of rare and wonderful beauty. And the sea-maiden spake to them, saying, "Ask something of me, for I know the secrets

of the sea." Then Gudrun besought her to speak concerning her home and kinsfolk, and how it fared with her mother Queen Hilda, and Ortwin her brother. The sea-maiden answered: "To-night, before the sun set, I was sixty leagues to northward, and there passed a fleet of many Danish warships on the waters above my head. I heard the warriors talk. Ortwin is there, Yarl Wate, and Yrolt, with a host of mighty-handed men; and they steer for Normandy. Hilda the queen fares well, and sends them on their errand." Gudrun said, "These are of a truth glad tidings; but tell me of Herwig; does he live, and has he forgotten Gudrun?" The sea-maiden answered, "Herwig is with them; he has not forgotten, for I heard him speak of Gudrun as his dear and only love. Be of good cheer, maiden, there are strong hands

dow, they saw the ground covered deep with snow, and the wind was blowing very bleakly. Then Hildeburg found her way to the queen's chamber where Gerlinda slept upon a bed of down, and besought her with tears that if they were to be sent out to wash in the bitter cold they might at least have shoes to wear because of the snow. Gerlinda awoke in a rage, and turning on her soft pillows said, "You shall both do double task to-day for this; and if you fail you shall be flogged. Shoes, forsooth! You shall not have them. Let your pride warm you!" Hildeburg prayed, "Have pity on us, or we shall perish in the bitter snow." But Gerlinda answered, "Then perish! What care I if you live or if you die? It is naught to me." Then Gudrun, who had ventured to follow a little behind Hildeburg, said, "A day may come when you will remember these cruel words." But the queen had the maidens driven out from the castle, and made them walk with naked feet through the snow to their hard task on the cold sea beach.

Now at noon the Danish war-ships drew nigh shore, and Yarl Wate ran the vessels aground just off a headland where a forest stretched down to the water's edge. There the Danes encamped with all their host, both of men and horses, and hid themselves in the shelter of the forest till they might learn how the land lay.

When they had taken counsel together they determined to send out spies; and Herwig and Ortwin being bent on going, these two went forth to spy out the

country, saying to their comrades, "If we are taken, ransom us; if we fall, avenge us;" and gat them into a little boat, and rowed along the shore and round the woody headland till they saw a bare bleak bleach and two maidens standing by the sea.

Gudrun saw the boat and said to Hildeburg, "Peradventure these be the men whereof the sea-maiden spake. I should die of shame if any kinsfolk of mine saw Hettel's daughter in this wretched plight." And Hildeburg being likewise ashamed, they left their washing on the beach and fled. Then Ortwin and Herwig called after them to stay, saying, "Good washerwomen, do not flee from us; we will not harm you." But the maidens made as though they heard not.

Then said Herwig, "For the sake of womankind we

fairer than we. But, good sirs, if you mean us well, hinder us no longer from our work, for we shall smart for it at night."

Then Ortwin took out rings of red gold, saying, "These will we give you if you will only answer us the questions that we shall ask."

"Gifts are of no use to us," said Gudrun, "they would be taken from us. Ask your questions quickly, but do not keep us idling from our work. We will answer, even if each word should cost a stripe to-night."

Then Herwig asked, "Tell us whose is the castle yonder?"

They answered, "That is King Hartmuth's castle, these are his lands."

"And Hartmuth, is he within the castle?"

They answered, "Yes: and with him four thousand of his strongest warriors keep the walls."

Now the maidens might have gone back to their work, for the warriors had learned all that they wanted to know; but Gudrun and Hildeburg tarried on, because the Danish tongue was so sweet to them and sounded like old music to their ears.

Ortwin said, "Why does Hartmuth keep so many warriors within walls? Is he then at war with his neighbors, or has he need to rule his people with the sword?"

Gudrun answered, "Nay. But he used to fear sometimes that a people far across the sea would come and take vengeance for a king of theirs whom he slew. Now,

perchance, it is old habit; it is long ago, and Hegelingen is so far." But at the mention of her home the tears came up in Gudrun's eyes, insomuch that she was fain to turn aside to hide them.

Then seeing them shiver in the snow, Herwig and Ortwin took off their furred mantles and besought the maidens to wrap themselves from the cold; but Gudrun said, "God reward you for your charity, but it is not meet for a maid to wear the garment of a man."

Now as Herwig steadfastly beheld the face of Gudrun he saw continually how like she was to Hettel's daughter, yet never so much as thought that it was Gudrun herself, believing that Hartmuth had long ago forced her to be his wife. And Ortwin said, "Many years ago, was not a company of noble maidens carried captive to this place? And was not one of them called Gudrun?"

Gudrun told him, "Yes: Hartmuth brought them. I knew Gudrun well; and better than most I know how much she suffered, and how long. If you know any friends of Gudrun's, I pray you tell them, 'She suffered, and she kept her troth, and died.'" For Gudrun thought, it is better that my kinsfolk think so than know of my disgrace.

When he heard these words, a great trembling fell upon Herwig, and he cried out in the bitterness of his soul, "O Gudrun, thou that wast and art my only love! What can I do? Too late! too late!"

Gudrun said quickly, "Man, do not lie to me. Thou Herwig! Herwig died long ago. I tell you I

have seen him with his spear bear down an army when he came and fought before Hegelingen. No. Herwig is dead, or long ere this he would have come to save his faithful maid from shame!"

Then said Herwig, "Who art thou?"

Gudrun answered, "One of the captive maidens."

"If you were one of Gudrun's maidens," he said, "you should know this ring upon my hand, for it was Gudrun's ring. She gave it me."

Then a light came into Gudrun's face and the tears into her eyes. "I know the ring," she cried. "I gave it; and to thee. I am Gudrun. Behold thy ring is yet upon my hand!" She fell upon his breast, and there he folded her. Who shall tell the tears they wept at greeting after so long sorrow? So they all knew each other, and Gudrun found her lover and her brother both in one day.

Herwig would have carried Gudrun off straightway to the Danish camp but for Ortwin. Gudrun pleaded likewise to be delivered immediately from her hard bondage; but Ortwin would not. He said, "How can I steal thee, sister, like a thief? Fear not, we will certainly deliver thee."

And Herwig said, "Ortwin is right. We cannot do this thing. But be of good courage; we have many thousand stalwart Danes with us, and the day is nigh at hand." But Gudrun's heart sank within her, for she knew that a short delay had cost already all the years of her captivity. Herwig said, "Only a little while and we

will never more be parted." So the two men entered again into the boat and rowed away to their camp behind the headland.

When they were gone Hildeberg said, "We have tarried too long from our task to get it done to-night, but let us set to work and try what we can do, if peradventure it may lighten our punishment." Proudly spake Gudrun: "Away with your tasks! I have talked with kings to-day, and they have held me in their arms. I will no longer slave. Gerlinda may do her worst. I care not."

And with that she took up all the heap of linen clothes and flung them in the sea.

Now it befell that Heregard, that same faithless damsel which left her mistress for love of the king's cup-

washing baskets, she said, "Where are the clothes, you idle drudge?"

Gudrun answered, "I threw them into the sea. There they may stay; I will no longer wash your clothes."

Gerlinda's very fingers itched to strike Gudrun. Quickly she commanded to fetch a bundle of sharp thorns, and bade her servants strip Gudrun and bind her to the door-post for a flogging.

Then while all the women made doleful lamentations, Gudrun bethought what she should do. And presently she spake to Gerlinda, saying, "How can I wear the crown after being scourged in sight of all the servants in the hall?"

"What mean you?" asked the queen, scarce believing her ears.

Gudrun answered, "I am tired of drudging at your tasks, weary of rags and beggar's fare. My mind is changed. I will be queen. Go and tell Hartmuth so."

Then Gerlinda, rejoicing greatly in her triumph, made haste and told her son. And Hartmuth, not yet daring to believe the words he heard, ran in, and though Gudrun was still clad in her dripping rags, would have taken her in his arms and comforted her from her long hardships. But Gudrun drew back and avoided him, saying, "Let not my lord the king be angry, but to-day I am a serving-maiden, and in these tattered garments I shrink from before the king's state and magnificence.

Array me first in royal raiment, that I may shame neither myself nor thee."

Hartmuth said, "Thou art queen already. Command what thou wilt and it shall be done according to thy word."

Then said Gudrun, "I would have a bath made ready to-night and all my women set free to wait on me." So Hartmuth sent and commanded her thirty maidens to be brought from their tasks, and caused them to be clothed in garments fitting their high degree, and set them to wait upon Gudrun. And next morning when they were brought before the king, Gudrun walked queen among them all as the moon sails among the stars.

Hartmuth commanded the tables to be spread and piled with delicious meats; and they poured out the ale

first gather together all his nobles to a feast, that they may see their queen and approve the king's choice, and so have no excuse for after strife."

Hartmuth answered, "After thine own manner will I wed thee." So he sent out messengers to go all round the country and summon his lords to the banquet. But Gudrun went away to her chamber, and when she was alone with her handmaidens she bade them be of good courage, for deliverance was certainly nigh at hand; and she spake to them concerning Herwig and her brother whom she had met on the sea beach. Then were they all glad, and Gudrun laughed aloud for joy. But a certain damsel of the castle passing by the chamber door, heard her laugh and went and told the queen. And Gerlinda went and told Hartmuth, saying, "Gudrun laughed to-night. She has not laughed for years. This is an ill-foreboding; I feel as though some evil hung above our heads." But Hartmuth answered, "What idle fear is this? Gudrun laughed? Why not? It is fit she should make merry, and rejoice to end her toil, and wed with me, and be the Queen of Normandy." So with a smile he bade his mother go to rest; but he went down into the hall and walked among his guards and set the watches for the night. Gerlinda lay and tossed upon her bed of down, and sleepless longed for day, yet feared to see it break.

Two of Gudrun's maidens watched at her window through the night; a wild March night, when the clouds were torn in the windy sky and the very heavens seemed

, and ever and anon
as the darkness lifted they perceiv
their banners, and ran to Gudrun,
tress, wake, for help has come."

At the same moment the war
and the castle woke into a tumult
as Hartmuth and his knights girt
hurried to the battlements. Thence
saw the avenging banner of the son
with dagger points over stripes of bl
escutcheon marked with a red-gold he
brown. They saw a white banner with
Queen Hilda wrought for old Yarl W
of all, the flag of Herwig, King of
weed figured on an azure field. The
down to the great hall with his fathe
himself at the head of all his warriors
to open the castle gates.

But his mother came and
"Why go out

of it, and something tells me I shall never see you more."

But Hartmuth said to his knights, "Take her away. This is no place for women." And when they had so done he cried, "Fling open the gates!" and with his mighty following, swarmed out upon the foe. First he met Ortwin, and they brake a spear together, but the crush of battle parted them. Then again they met, and Hartmuth clave Ortwin's helmet and rejoiced to see the blood of his enemy. But a hundred spears pressed forward and strong Danish hands were there to drag Prince Ortwin from his death. Then far as a man might see the war-waves rolled upon the plain, and the hosts swayed to and fro in one great angry battle-tide. And as here and there upon a sea a billow swells more angry than the rest, so round Yarl Wate and Herwig, and round about Hartmuth and King Ludwig, the war waves raged most furiously. Ludwig and Herwig fought; Herwig burning to avenge King Hettel's death; but Ludwig brought him to his knees and struck him senseless for the moment with his heavy blade. A sturdy Dane put forth his body in that instant and took the death-blow meant for his master. Full of bitter shame was Herwig that Gudrun should see him on his knees before the slayer of her father; and he arose and snatched his sword again, and while King Ludwig raised his arm to strike, smote him through the armpit to the heart; so the king rolled down and sobbed his life-blood out upon the sand. King Ludwig being slain, the Danes gave a great shout and

tare the Norman host to pieces like clouds tattered in the blast. Hartmuth made a great stand against Wate before the castle doors, but the old Yarl's blows were like a sledge-hammer beating a smith's anvil; and in the midst of the fray Hartmuth heard his sister's voice shrieking for help, for a murderous Dane had got into the castle and she was struggling for her life. Yarl Wate knew it and let him go; so Hartmuth turned to the castle gate and saw the man come running out, for Gudrun's women had fought for Ortrun and driven him down, and he was thinking to escape; but Hartmuth killed him in the gateway, and then ran to fight Yarl Wate again.

Now Ortrun looked out from the window, and beheld how the Normans were slain on all sides by the fierce-hearted Danes, and she fell down at Gudrun's feet and besought her, saying, "Have pity on my people, on my friends and kindred. For the dead's sake spare the living. Scarce a handful of our men remain. My father has been slain as thine was. Have pity on us: you have had blood for blood. And see—O sister, see how Wate is pressing on my brother Hartmuth! He will kill him in his cruel war-rage. Hartmuth is faint and staggers! Save my brother, sweet Gudrun; pity us, and bid the battle cease."

Then Gudrun took Ortrun in her arms and kissed her, and said, "Sister, God forbid that I should forget all thy tenderness to me; but what can I do? How can I end this bitter strife?" And Ortrun took her kerchief,

saying, "Wave it to Herwig. Make no tarrying, for the love of God, or Hartmuth will be slain!" So Gudrun waved it from the window and by good fortune Herwig saw it and came to the wall. Gudrun said, "Quick! stay the battle, as you love me. Save Hartmuth. See. Make haste!"

Then Herwig hasted, and ran in between Yarl Wate and Hartmuth and cried aloud, "Gudrun bids the battle cease. Let no more blood be shed." But the battle-madness was on Yarl Wate and he was terrible to friend and foe. "What! cease at a woman's bidding?" and he took Herwig by the middle and flung him far afield, then ran again on Hartmuth hungering ravenously for his life. But they blew the trumpet and the battle was stayed; and the host came up, and some with their shields sheltered Hartmuth; others, a great company of them, hustled Wate away. So Hartmuth was saved from death; and they took and bound him and carried him off captive to their ships. Then the Danes hewed down the castle doors with their axes and brake in for plunder. They carried off King Ludwig's treasure chests with all his gold and jewels, and beat down all that hindered them.

Ortrun sought Gudrun and came weeping, saying, "Thy people are athirst for blood. They slay on all hands men and women. They will have my life: save me, good sister!" Gudrun answered, "Fear not, thy life is dearer to me than my own. Come in with us, thou and thy maidens. No evil shall come nigh thee, dear sister."

Then came also the Queen Gerlinda wringing her hands and wailing bitterly. She knelt down and kissed Gudrun's feet, and covered them with her tears, and craved for mercy, saying, "O mighty queen! deliver me from this blood-thirsty band."

Gudrun said: "Did ever prayer or cry of mine once melt your stony heart? Have you not turned a deaf ear to my sharp distress? Yet I will let you in. Be in my chamber as one of my maidens." Then Gudrun let her in, and made fast her chamber door; and all the women crowded together for fear at hearing the terrible sounds in the castle.

There came a mighty blow which brake down the chamber door. Yarl Wate ran foaming in among the women; blood upon his jaws and beard, blood upon his

to them of mine. Go stand with Ortrun's women if you choose."

Yarl Wate raged up and down the castle seeking Gerlinda, but at last came back to Gudrun's chamber in a fury. "Where is that woman? Give her up to me. I tell you she is here: and I will have her."

Gudrun answered boldly, "She is not here."

Wate said, "Then I will slay them all, for one I know is she." Now Queen Gerlinda had crouched down behind the other women, and at these terrible words the rest fell down upon their knees; so Wate saw her. Then he came and dragged her to the door by the hair, and saying fiercely, "Have you any more clothes for my queen's daughter to wash to-day?" cut off her head; whereat the women shrieked in terror. He said, "Now I will have her that sold herself to that dead woman"; and at this so many of the maidens looked toward Heregard that Wate seized her and at one blow sent her head rolling on the floor.

Now after the strife was done and they had buried the bodies of the slain, the Danes carried off five hundred captives to their ships and much treasure, and set sail for Denmark. Ortrun went with Gudrun in one ship, and Hartmuth went in keeping of Yarl Wate. Proudly they sailed home to Castle Matalan, and joyful was the greeting that Queen Hilda gave her warriors. They held a royal feast with music and with dance, and day by day in the mead hall the skalds sang of the deeds that each man had done in battle.

Long pondered Gudrun in her mind how the long strife between the Danes and Normans might be ended; for she thought, a day will come when the Normans will grow strong again and seek revenge; first they, then we may conquer, and the feud will never cease. So she went to her brother Ortwin, and said, "Brother, let us make a lasting peace with the Normans; and therein that we may bind both peoples do thou take the gentle Ortrun for thy wife." Ortwin said, "I am in nowise loth, for Ortrun is both fair and tender of heart. But would Ortrun wed with me? Have we not slain her father and her mother?" Gudrun said, "Ask her; she is all gentleness."

And a little after that came Ortrun shyly to Gudrun, saying, "Shall I?" Gudrun answered, "You have called me sister; will you be my real sister?" Ortrun kissed her—"Dear sister, I will."

Then Gudrun made intercession with the queen her mother that Hartmuth might be set at liberty; and this being granted, he was brought into the great hall, not knowing whether life or death should be his portion. Gudrun came and led him away a little apart and spake with him. "Hartmuth, look forward many years; think of the children of our peoples, and their children's children. What if this strife go on through many generations, and our boys be only born to die in battle, and our girls to grow up mothers weeping for their dead? Is it not better to establish peace forever? My brother would wed thy sister, and we offer thee the noblest maiden in

our realm, the lady Hildeburg, that was ever a sweet and faithful friend to me, to be thy wife. Wilt thou thus make alliance with us and put an end to many sorrows throughout many ages?"

Hartmuth walked to and fro upon the pavement, and for a long while answered nothing, but went on turning over many things in his mind, and weighing his long love against the long future of his people. Presently he spake: "When Ortwin weds with Ortrun, I will take Hildeburg to wife." Gudrun was moved to tears, and took him by the hand and called him friend, and kissed him for the first and only time; and that in sight of Herwig and of all the people. Then lightly ran she off to Hildeburg with these glad tidings, knowing aforetime the secret of her heart.

Such a day was never known for rejoicing in Denmark as when Gudrun and Herwig were wed, and with them Ortwin and Ortrun, and Hartmuth and Hildeburg. The five hundred captives were set free, and Danes and Normans made a solemn vow that peace should henceforth be between them, since they were become of one blood. Thenceforward, in the long years of quiet, when both peoples prospered and grew rich, their children's children sitting by the fireside told the tale of Gudrun, and blessed her that she made the peace.

OLGER THE DANE

By Sir George W. Cox and Eustace Hinton Jones

THERE was weeping in the palace of Godfrey, King of Denmark; for the queen whom he dearly loved had died in giving birth to a son; and all the people mourned, both high and low; for she was a good queen, beautiful and royal among the noble ladies of the court and kind and tender to the poor. They took the babe from his dead mother's arms at midnight, and having named him Olger, carried him into another chamber and laid him on a richly quilted bed of down. Presently

love she bare him. She said, "Sweet one, there scarce remains a gift for me to give you after all my sisters have promised, yet I give you this: that you shall never die, but after you have lived a life of glory on the earth you shall be mine, and I will bring you home to dwell with me forever in Avalon, the land of Faery." And the lady having kissed him many times put the child back upon the bed; and all the fairies fled away into the air and the room was dark again.

Olger grew up a brave child, tall, and strong in his limbs and very comely, so that when he was ten years old there was none like him for beauty and strength, for Nature seemed to have lavished all her treasures on him.

Now Godfrey, King of Denmark, was a bold and haughty prince who stood in fear of no man, and it befell when messengers came from France summoning him to do homage to the emperor Charles the Great for his lands, that Godfrey returned for answer, "Tell Charles I hold my lands of God and my good sword, and if he doubt it let him come and see. I will not do him homage." Wherefore Charles came up against him with a mighty army, and after a long and stout resistance King Godfrey being defeated was obliged to promise to appear before the emperor every Easter and pay his allegiance. As a pledge that he would keep his word, the emperor required him to give up Olger his son for a hostage. To this Godfrey having agreed, Olger was carried away to the emperor's court, where he was instructed in all the

arts of the time; and the emperor was very glad to have so fearless and handsome a youth in his retinue.

For three years the King of Denmark came faithfully to pay his court as he had promised, but in the fourth year Eastertide went by and Godfrey did not come; the truth being that he was married again and had another son, and the new queen wrought upon her husband's pride, persuading him not to humble himself any more before King Charles; for she thought, "When the emperor finds he no longer pays homage Olger surely will be put to death, and so my son shall inherit the throne of Denmark." As his father did not redeem his word Olger was committed to prison in the Castle of St. Omer to wait while messengers went to Godfrey to find a reason of his breaking faith. But Olger was kindly treated by the castle-keeper, for he found favor in the eyes of his wife, and especially in those of Bellisande, his fair daughter, who loved him from the moment that she saw him. So instead of being cast into the dungeon, Olger was placed in the best apartments of the castle, richly hung with tapestry, and was waited upon like a prince; and Bellisande could no more keep her eyes from regarding him or her heart from going out toward him than the lily can help holding its cups out to get their fill of sunshine.

But Godfrey of Denmark entreated the messengers shamefully. He slit their ears and noses, shaved their heads, and sent them home disgraced. Wherefore these men returned to their master, and coming before Charles

all marred and disfigured as they were, cried loudly for vengeance against Godfrey and against his son Olger that was held as hostage. The emperor then sent orders to the castle to slay Olger instantly; but the kind-hearted castle-keeper begged that at least the lad might first be brought before him and told why, innocent, he yet must suffer death. So, being brought to the emperor at a time when he feasted among his nobles, Olger came with much gentleness and kneeled meekly at his feet. Seeing the lad thus abase himself for his father's pride, the emperor was moved with pity, and would fain have spared his life; but the messengers cried out for vengeance, and would have fallen on him themselves had not Duke Naymes of Bayiere pleaded for the boy and kept them back. Then Olger said, "Sire, you know that I am innocent of blame, having always rendered you obedience. Let me not suffer for my father's fault; but seeing I am his true heir, deign to receive from me the vassalage and homage he denies—that by a life of service in your cause I may atone for him. As for your noble messengers, so cruelly ill-used, I will seek from this hour to repair their disgrace and take upon me to atone for all my father's misdeeds against them and you, if you but spare my life and use it in your service."

Now while the barons interceded for the lad, a knight rode up the hall in haste. "Tidings, King Charles!" he cried—"evil tidings, alas! The Soudan and the Grand Turk Corsuble, and Dannemont his son, with King Caraheu have taken Rome by assault. Ovand

the Pope, the cardinals and legates, all have fled; the churches are destroyed; the holy relics lost, all save the body of St. Peter; and the Christians put to the sword. Wherefore the Holy Father charges you as Christian king and pillar of the faith to march to succor of the Church!"

Then Duke Naymes of Bayiere prayed to take Olger as his squire into the battle, offering to go bail for him in all his lands and hold himself a prisoner in his stead, if the lad should flee. Thereto the emperor having consented, straightway prepared his army for battle, swearing by his sceptre that he would never return till Rome should be restored to the Christians. But Olger first went back to the castle and wedded the beautiful Bellisande. When she wept at his departure, Olger said, "Leave these tears, for God has given me life and you have given me love; gifts that will strengthen me to do great deeds of arms." So he rode off with the host, with Naymes and his two brothers Geoffrey and Gautier; and they journeyed till they came to Rome and encamped upon a hill before the city walls with an army of two hundred thousand men.

Now the Paynim host came out from Rome to fight the Franks upon the plain. Olger, bewildered and amazed to see the great crowds of knights in glittering armor, and the banners, and to hear for the first time the din of war, would fain have gone with Naymes and his brothers into the fight; but they forbade him, charging him to remain among the tents.

Olger the Dane

Looking down upon the battle from the hill, Olger watched the hosts and tracked the standard of King Charles as it moved to the front. He saw the armies come together with a shout and join in battle with a noise that rent the air. But in a little while the standard wavered; then it fell, then rose again; and then he saw King Charles's own company of knights repulsed, while Sir Alory that bare the standard turned and fled for very life upon his horse. Seizing a battle-axe Olger ran down into the plain, caught the bridle of Alory's horse, and smote down the standard-bearer in his flight, saying, "Coward, go home with all the speed you may! Live among monks and women there. But leave the noble banner, Refuge of France, with me!" Olger quickly disarmed the frightened and trembling Alory, got a squire to dress him in the standard-bearer's armor, leaped on a horse, and sword at breast, banner in hand, galloped to the battle with the fierceness of a lion, hewed his way through the Paynim to the thickest of the fight, and finding Naymes and many nobles held prisoners behind the pagan ranks, cut his way through to them, loosed their bonds, and cut a road back again for him and them. Wherever he went about the field Olger reaped among the enemy till he ramparted himself within a wall of slain. Hearing the king cry out for help, he leaped his steed out from a wall of dead and spurred to where he was. The king was down, Dannemont had killed his horse under him and pressed him sore on every side. But Olger, though he had but one fighting hand, since he

bare the standard in the other, rode upon the Paynim and quickly carved out a clear space about the king while he mounted a fresh horse. And in like manner three times he saved the life of Charles. Then with Olger and the standard at their head the king and all his host shouting their battle-cry, "Montjoy!" charged on the Paynim, routed them, and drove them to the city gates.

After this King Charles commanded the standard-bearer to be brought before him; but he wist not it was Olger in Alory's armor, for his visor was down. Then said the emperor, "Alory, I thank you heartily for this day's work, and though I know not what should have made you flee at the outset, you have redeemed your honor nobly. I cannot tell how to reward you. Choose any province in my kingdom and I will make you ruler of it; and you shall be my lieutenant to do battle for me in all disputes touching the crown of France, O brave and fearless Alory!" And he wept for joy that God had sent him such a champion. But a squire that stood by, being surprised to hear the king speak thus of Alory, said, "Sire, he is not on the field. Alory bowed the colors and fled at the first to save his skin, while as for this knight, who seized the standard from Alory's hands, I helped to dress him in Alory's armor, but I wot not who he is." Then Olger lifted his helmet, and kneeling to the king said, "Have pity, sire, on Godfrey King of Denmark, and let his son atone for his offence and be your faithful vassal in his stead." And the King answered, "You have altogether turned into love the

anger which I bare against you and your father. I give you your request. Wherefore rise Sir Olger, Champion for France and Charles, and God be with you." Thus Olger received the accolade upon the battlefield, and all the peers of France came to salute him and to render thanks for their deliverance. Then, flushed with his new made knighthood, Sir Olger sped like an arrow against the foe and fought with a courage surmounting mortal fear. Bearing the standard aloft he made it terrible to the enemy, insomuch that the Paynim withdrew the length of a bowshot before the wind of his sword and the trampling of his steed. And wheresoever the Franks fell in disorder, or wavering turned to flee, a knight upon a great horse would surely ride into their midst and do such mighty deeds that they turned to see for very wonderment, and scarce believed him mortal, till knowing their brave champion, they would cry with a great shout, "Olger the Dane!" and fearless in his company, charge mightily upon the foe.

Sadonne rode from the Paynim camp to bid Dannemont hold the field, since Caraheu, Emperor of India, with thirty kings, was coming to his help. He met the Paynim army coming toward him in full flight, crying out in panic—"Save yourselves, for Michael the Archangel fights against us!"

And he saw the terrible knight on the tall horse, and threw down his arms and begged for life.

"Who are you, that I should grant it?" said Sir Olger.

He answered, "My master is Caraheu, Emperor of Upper India, and I am Sadonne, his admiral, cousin to King Corsuble."

Then said Sir Olger, "I grant your life on one condition: bear Caraheu my challenge to fight with me in single combat, and so determine all the issue of the war."

Next day came Caraheu with a stately retinue to the pavilion of King Charles, bearing in his train the beauteous Gloriande, Corsuble's daughter, the fairest woman of the East. Her hair flowed in a golden shower to her feet, and a jewelled circle of rare workmanship bound it about her temples. She wore a dress of pure white damask sewn with pearls, a wonder of the weaver's art, which took nine years to weave.

Then said Caraheu the Emperor: "I seek Olger the Dane, who has demanded single combat. I accept his challenge, and I bring fair Gloriande, my promised bride, a noble prize for victory."

But the son of King Charles, Charlot, being envious of Sir Olger, said, "It is not meet, great Caraheu, that you should battle with my father's bondman, but rather with me."

Caraheu answered, "I fight not braggarts, but men. Sir Olger is a king of men, far nobler than a mere king of land."

"Noble enemy," answered Olger, "your words make me grieve to fight against you rather than at your side. Yet Charlot is the emperor's son, and worthy to joust with the bravest."

"He shall tourney with Sadonne, my admiral," said Caraheu, "but I will fight with you alone."

Thus a double combat was arranged, and they went to an isle to fight, and Gloriande with them, that her eyes might strengthen them to battle for such a prize. But Dannemont the Paynim treacherously hid three hundred men among the bushes to lie in wait. Caraheu's shield bore, on a field argent, four bands azure with the figure of Mahound upon a scutcheon gules. Sir Olger's shield was white with a black eagle thereupon. Bravely they fought for half a day, and long the victory seemed to waver between these two redoubtable champions. Meanwhile Sadonne killed Charlot's horse, and then honorably dismounted from his own to fight on equal terms; but Charlot made a feint of fighting till he brought himself to where Sadonne's steed was; then leaping on it, basely fled.

Caraheu's good sword, Courtain, of marvellous temper, cut through Olger's shield and armor. Nevertheless, at last the Dane by great strength bore Caraheu to the ground, and got him at his mercy; but still he admired the Indian monarch's courtesy and courage so much that he would not slay him. Then Dannemont with Corsuble and his men seeing their champion down, rushed from their hiding place and assailed Sir Olger; whereat Caraheu, being very wroth at their treachery, fought beside Sir Olger, crying, "Traitors, better death than shame like this!" So the enemies of an hour before became brothers in arms for honor's sake, and between them slew a hun-

dred of their common foes. Howbeit they were overpowered by numbers, and Sir Olger owed his life to Gloriande's pleading. He was led away to prison loaded with chains. In vain did Dannemont and Corsuble seek to reconcile Caraheu, their great ally, to their treasonable act. Caraheu, though he had to leave Gloriande whom he loved, went over with all his host to King Charles, and joined with him to gain redress from the Paynim for Olger's seizure.

But Gloriande came secretly to Olger in his prison, loosed his chains, and set him free. So he escaped to King Charles and Caraheu. After that together they fought the Paynim till they discomfited them; and Rome being freed, the Pope returned to the city with his cardinals and legates, and Holy Church was stablished firm again. Olger with his own hand rescued Gloriande, and gave her into Caraheu's hands to be his wife. So they were wed and baptized in Rome; and the Indian emperor returned to his empire a Christian, with a Christian wife. But first he gave Sir Olger the famed Damascus sword, Courtain, saying, "You conquered me in fight and won my life and also my bride, and yet you gave both back to me. Take therefore this sword, offered in friendly homage, as a pledge that I owe you all."

Then Olger came to France with King Charles, and found his wife had died in giving birth to a son named Baldwin. And Baldwin was dear to Olger, and the child's prattle very grateful to his ears for Bellisande's sweet sake.

Olger the Dane

Now the Paynim had come down on Denmark, seizing on all the land save only Mayence, where King Godfrey was besieged and suffered famine. And the queen said, "Surely this misery is come on us for Olger's sake whom we abandoned." And being brought very low with hunger and distress, at last they wrote a letter to King Charles, praying him to overlook the past, and in pity send them succor lest they die. But Charles said coldly, "Nay—since Godfrey holds his lands of God and his good sword, let him hold them. I will not raise a finger for his help;" and straitly forbade that any knight about his court should go to succor them an pain of death. Then turning to Olger he said—"You would not wish to aid a traitor who has thrown off my yoke, insulted me, and who, moreover, left you selfishly to suffer for his crimes?" But Olger bending before Charles the King, answered—"Sire, I kneel as vassal to my king, but Godfrey is my father and I go. The king will not forbid a son his duty."

Then said Charles, "Go—but go alone, saving your own servants. Mine shall not fight in a rebel's cause."

So Olger hastened to Mayence with only thirty of his servants. And when he reached the city walls he found a battle raging; for King Godfrey had made a desperate sally against his enemies and thrown them into disorder, but was fallen in the fray pierced with many wounds, and the Danes were fighting for his lifeless body. Olger with his little band rode into the battle with his sword Courtain, and where he passed he left a lane hedged

up with bodies on either side, while the Danes, rejoicing at so good a succor, with his help put the Paynims to the rout, nor ceased pursuit till all their enemies were either slain or driven from the land. So Olger was made King of Denmark in his father's stead, and remained five years in that country till he had founded a wise government and made good laws for the people. Then he returned to France and came kneeling to the emperor at Eastertide, saying, "Godfrey's son, of his own free will, thus pays his homage to King Charles for all the land of Denmark."

Thus he grew in greater favor than ever with the emperor.

One day Baldwin, his son, now grown a pretty, fair-haired boy and general favorite, played chess with Charlot, whom, having fool's-mated, he bantered on the game. The prince, ever jealous of the father, and now stung by the son's playful triumph, flew in a passion, and with the heavy chess board beat out his brains.

Bitterly Olger wept when he returned from hunting, to find the son he left so full of life and frolic but an hour before, struck down by a murderer's hand. Taking the body in his arms, and covering it with tears and kisses, he came to King Charles and laid it at his feet.

"Sire," said he, "look upon your son's foul work."

"Truly," answered the emperor, "I grieve for you, Sir Olger, and would give half my kingdom to blot out the deed. But there is no repayment for so great a loss." Said Olger, "There is no repayment, but there

is punishment; and I demand to fight with your son to avenge my poor boy's death."

"Nay, Olger, have pity," said the emperor; "spare my son. How could he fight with you and have a bare chance of his life?"

"What of that?" returned the knight, bitterly. "Would he have more chance with the headsman if he met his rightful doom upon the public block? What is your son more than mine? Deliver him to me."

"I cannot," answered the king.

"Then, sire, till you learn justice we will part"— and Olger turned upon his heel and left the court, and came to Didier, King of Lombardy, who made war against King Charles, and fought for him.

It was in Lombardy that Olger got his faithful squire Benoist, a steadfast knight, who held his life cheap in his master's cause. Followed only by Benoist, Sir Olger battled long upon the Lombard side against King Charles and his host. Where men would send a troop to re-enforce a flagging portion of the army, Sir Olger and his squire rode forth alone. Wherever went the black eagle on the argent shield, the Lombards rallied, and the Franks fell back in terror; for a line of slain was the war track of the Dane, and where men massed the thickest there he rode and made them fall like ripened sheaves before his sword Courtain. All the Franks feared to see their champion thus arrayed against them, and murmured loudly against the king for letting him depart.

It was a long warfare wherein the Lombards fought

their way on from place to place; and the Franks, being always worsted before the mighty Dane, schemed how they might take him by subtlety. Archbishop Turpin with a little band of men came on him by a fountain lying wearily asleep after a battle, his arms flung here and there upon the grass, and his great black charger Broiefort turned loose to graze. One seized his helm, another his sword Courtain, while others bare away his lance and shield, and bound him, while he still slept heavily from great fatigue.

King Charles would have slain Olger, both because he fought against him, beating down the flower of his chivalry, and because he feared his vengeance against Charlot his son. But Archbishop Turpin said, "Nay—it was for the sake of France and Christendom I lent myself to surprise in bonds the noblest knight that ever wielded sword; but for the sake of France and Christendom his life must not be lost. Howbeit since I took him, let me guard him safe in prison so he may do no further hurt against the cause, and I will be his bond." Then Turpin took Olger to his castle, where he treated him with great kindness, holding him prisoner only on parole.

Now Achar, King of England, landed in France with Clarice his daughter to do homage for his crown to the emperor; but Bruhier, a Saracen giant, with a mighty army coming to make war on France, seized them before they could reach the court, and marched to battle against Charles.

Long time they fought, but Charles's army was put to the worse and fled before the giant and his host, till fearing any more to go against the Saracens, the Franks called on the emperor to send for Olger the Dane from his prison. So he went himself and entreated him to come to their succor. But Olger would not until the emperor should first deliver up his son Charlot into his hand. This for a long time he would not do, but at last his army clamored at him, saying, "Have you no care nor thought for us that we die by thousands in a hopeless fight? What is one life to thousands?" So Charles was fain to give up his son. Charlot begged in vain for mercy, for Olger remembered but his fair-haired child and how his life was cruelly beaten out. So taking the prince by the hair he drew Courtain and raised his arm to strike. Then a voice fell from the sky and the place was lightened round about, "Olger, stay thy hand! Slay not the son of the king!" All heard the voice and feared greatly, and Olger's hand fell to his side without striking. Then Charles embraced him and rendered thanks to Olger. "Thank heaven, not me," said the Dane, "I do but bow to its will." So they were made friends.

Then Olger grieved for his sword Courtain and his good horse Broiefort, and said he would not go out to battle till these were restored to him. Archbishop Turpin brought the sword, which had been carefully preserved, but the horse had not been seen for seven years, and was believed to be dead. Then the emperor sent

for his own charger, but Olger, by leaning on the crupper, broke the horse's back; and ten other of the best horses that could be found fell beneath the burly knight as he mounted them. Then Olger said he must go afoot. But a certain canon said he had seen the horse Broiefort dragging blocks of stone for the Abbey of St. Meaux; and Duke Naymes and Archbishop Turpin went with a retinue to beg the horse back. They found him a mere skeleton, with the hair worn off his flanks, his tail shorn to the stump, his skin galled by the shafts, yet drawing a load such as four horses could not move. But when they brought him to Olger, the knight leaned upon his crupper, and the good horse yielded not, but strengthened himself to the weight, and remembering his master he neighed and snorted with joy, and scratched with his feet, and lay down humbly before him, till Olger and Charles and all the barony wept at the sight.

Then Olger went to battle against Bruhier, and with him for their champion the Franks had no fear. Victory followed where he led. Sometimes, amazed, both friends and foes paused in the midst of conflict, wonderstruck to see his valiant deeds. He routed the Saracens and slew the giant Bruhier, and rescued the Princess Clarice, whom her father gave to Olger for his wife. So they were wed and went to England, where Achar gave up his crown to his deliverer, and made him King of Britain. But in one of his battles his faithful horse Broiefort was killed under him, and Olger grieved for him for the rest of his life, even as he had grieved for his son

Olger the Dane

Baldwin. Olger reigned in Britain many years with his wife Clarice, till, being tired of peace, he went and fought the battles of the Cross in Palestine. There Caraheu the emperor joined him, and they overthrew King Moysant, and the Soudan Moradin and his brother Branquemond; none could stand against the spear of the knight on the great horse who bore the black-eagle shield. There Olger fought till he grew old and gray; yet waxed not his arm feeble, nor wearied he in fight; men still fell thick before his sword Courtain, and where he went still panic spread among his foes, and fearless courage filled the breasts of all his friends. He took Acre, Babylon, and Jerusalem, of all which cities he was made king; but he gave them to his kinsmen to rule in his stead, for he would fain see Charles the Great and his court again. So with a mighty retinue and accompanied by Caraheu and a fleet of vessels he set sail for France.

But a storm came down upon the sea and drave the ships hither and thither, at mercy of wind and wave, till they were parted one from another; and Olger's vessel, mast, oars, and sail being carried away, was driven far out of its course into strange seas, where an unseen current drew it swiftly through the billowy foam and crashed the ship at last against a reef of loadstone rock. The mariners all leaped overboard, seeking in vain to climb the slippery rocks: the angry surf whirled the strong swimmers up and beat them lifeless on the reef. Sir Olger stood alone at night upon the sinking ship, looking out on the black tempest and the hurtling sea. He bared

his head and drew his sword Courtain, which having kissed upon the hilt, he offered thanks to heaven for the might and courage granted him through life: then with an undaunted mien awaited death.

Presently he heard a voice in the air cry, "Olger, I wait for thee. Fear not the waves, but come!" Then he cast himself into the sea, and a great wave bore him on its crest high up in air and placed him safely on the rocks. A strange light showed a narrow pathway among the crags, which Olger followed, walking toward the brightness till he reached a shining palace, invisible by day, but which at night glows into mortal ken—a palace of ivory and gold and ebony, glorious to behold, its halls made fair with imagery—and therein was set a banquet of most rare and dainty meats. None dwelt within this palace save a fairy horse, named Papilion, who motioned Olger to the banquet, and having brought water in a golden ewer that he might cleanse his hands, served humbly beside the knight at table till he had finished his repast. Then Papillon carried him to a bed whose pillars held golden candlesticks wherein tall tapers burned through the night. There Olger slept. But in the morning when he woke the palace had waned away in the dawn, and he was lying in a garden where the trees are always green, and the flowers fade not, and the summer never dies; where the sun goes not down, and the soft sweet sky is never darkened with storm; a garden in the Vale of Avalon, the land of Faery. And while his eyes were yet dazzled in wonderment, there stood sud-

denly at his side Morgan le Fay, queen of the faeries, clothed in a shining white kirtle, who said, "Welcome, dear knight, to Avalon. A weary time have I longed and waited for thy coming. Now thou art mine; my lord, my love. So let the restless ages roll, and the world totter and decay! We will dream on forever in this changeless vale." Then she put an enchanted ring upon his hand; so the years slipped from his shoulders and he stood before her in prime of youth and vigor. And she placed upon his brow a priceless golden crown of myrtle leaves and laurel, a crown no mortal treasure would suffice to buy—the Crown of Forgetfulness. Then Olger remembered no more the things which were past. His old loves, toils and battles faded from his mind; and in place of a dead memory a living love was given him, and he loved the fairy queen, and he was hers and she was his. Then she brought him to a palace where he found King Arthur healed of his wound, with whom he talked of knightly deeds and often rode with him in friendly jousts against the forms of Sir Lancelot and Sir Tristrem, or the shapes of great giants and dragons which Morgan le Fay and her brother Oberon raised up by enchantment for their pastime.

Thus dwelt Sir Olger in a faery dream of love and pleasure in the land where there is no death and no time. And thus two hundred years passed by, like yesterday to him dreaming in the faery's lap.

But France fell into trouble. The enemy were on her soil. Battle raged, but there was none to lead her

armies forth to victory. Chivalry was either dead or slept. On every side the Franks were beaten by their foes and driven back by Paynim and by Saracen, until it seemed that they would be blotted out from among the peoples of the world; and they cried for a deliverer. Morgan le Fay heard and pitied them; and though it grieved her sore to part with her own dear knight, she said, "Olger must go back to battle again, for France and Christendom!" So she went to him and said:

"Dear one, do you know how long you have dwelt with me?"

"A week, a month, a year, perchance," he answered, with a smile and kiss—"one does not reckon time in Paradise."

Then she lifted the crown of forgetfulness from his brow, and his memory came again.

"I must go back," he cried, upstarting like one new wakened from a dream—"I have tarried here too long. Clarice will wonder why I stay, and Caraheu will think me wrecked. Peradventure Charles, my master, calls for Olger, and calls in vain. My sword, my horse, my spear! O, let me go, sweet queen. Yet tell me, have I dwelt long in this fair garden?"

"Not long to me, dear knight—but you shall go," she answered.

Then Morgan le Fay raised up his dead squire, Benoist, and brought his sword Courtain, and led forth Papillon for his steed.

"Guard well the ring upon your hand," she said,

"for, wearing it, your youth and vigor will not fade." She brought him moreover a torch, saying—"See that you kindle it not, so shall you live forever; but if by mischance it should break out and burn, cherish the fire with care, for the measure of your days is the last spark of the torch."

Then she threw a spell upon them all that they slept the while she carried them through the air to France. And when Sir Olger awoke he found himself lying by a fountain, his arms and armor at his side, and Benoist holding Papillon ready for him to mount: and all his life in Avalon seemed but a night's dream. Leaping to horse they rode into a city.

"What city is this?" asked Olger of a horseman whom he overtook.

"Montpellier, Sir Knight."

"Oh, yes," said the Dane, "but I had forgotten. In truth I ought to know Montpellier well enough, for a kinsman of mine is governor of the city," and he named the man he thought still ruled it.

"You are pleased to jest," the horseman answered—"there was a governor of the city of that name two hundred years ago—the present governor is Regnier. But the man you speak of was a romance writer, wherefore I see you jest in claiming kinship with him. I need not tell you that he wrote the romance of Olger the Dane; a good story, though few believe it now, except perchance a man who goes about the city very often singing it, and picks up money from the crowd."

The horseman slackened his pace a little till Benoist came up with him.

"Who is your master?" he whispered.

"Sir," said the faithful squire, "surely you must know him? He is Olger the Dane."

"You malapert," said the horseman, "Olger the Dane perished in shipwreck two hundred years ago, and but for courtesy to the chevalier your master, I would make you pay dearly for jesting with me!"

Then the Dane and his squire rode on to the market-place of Meaux, where they stopped at the door of an inn which Olger well remembered.

"Can we lodge here?" he asked.

"Certainly, Sir Knight," answered the innkeeper, "and be well treated."

"But I wish to see the landlord."

"Sir?" said the innkeeper. "I am the landlord."

"Nay, nay," answered Olger, "but I want to see Hubert the Neapolitan who keeps this house."

The man looked at him for a minute, and seeing the knight's countenance remain serious, he thought him nothing less than a madman. So he shut the door in his face, and having barred it, ran to an upper window and shouted into the street—"Here is a man who wishes to speak with Hubert, my grandfather's grandfather, who has been dead two hundred years. Seize him! He is mad or possessed with a devil. Send for the Abbot of St. Faron to come and cast out the evil spirit!"

A great crowd gathered about the inn and set upon

the knight and his squire, harassing them with stones and darts; and an archer shot at Benoist and killed him. Then Sir Olger, grieving for the death of his squire, turned upon the crowd in fierce anger and leaped Papillon into their midst and cut them down on all sides till he had scattered from the market-place all those that were not dead upon its pavement. But so hotly burned his wrath that it kindled the torch he bare in his breast; wherefore he rode with it to the church of St. Faron of Meaux. There the abbot met him.

Olger said, "Is your name Simon? You at least should know me, for I founded this abbey and endowed it with lands and money."

"Pardon me," answered the abbot, "but I know little of those who came before me. Will you tell me your name?"

"Olger the Dane."

"Strange," thought the good man to himself, "he calls me Simon when my name is Geoffrey, and the abbey charter certainly says that the abbot who lived in the days of Olger the Dane was named Simon. "Sir Knight," said the abbot aloud, "do you know that Simon has been buried so many years that his very bones are long since crumbled into dust?"

"What! Simon gone? And Charles the Great, and Caraheu and my wife Clarice—where are they all? Not dead—it cannot be!"

"Dead—long dead—two hundred years, my son," the abbot said. Then a great awe and wonderment fell

upon Sir Olger as he thought that his dream of Avalon and Morgan le Fay perchance was true; and he followed the abbot into the church, scarce knowing whither he went, and there told all that had happened to him. And the abbot believed him and gave thanks to Heaven for sending back the redoubtable champion of France and Christendom. The Olger told him the secret of the torch and begged him to make an iron treasure-house beneath the church, wherein so little air should come that the flame might dwindle to a single spark, and that spark being nursed and husbanded might smoulder slowly through the ages. Now this being done and the torch safely locked up and guarded, the abbot became very curious to take in his own hands the strange ring the knight wore on his finger; and Olger let him draw it off. Instantly his youth departed, and he shrivelled into feebleness, a helpless withered husk of a man, with a skin like wrinkled parchment, and no sign of life save a quivering in his aged jaws. But his ring being restored, the Dane's strength and youth returned, and he leaped upon Papillon and rode off to fight for France.

The enemy was gathered at Chartres, a mighty host, and the flagging and disheartened Franks, broken into disorder, fled everywhere before the Paynim. Suddenly appeared in their midst a knight of mighty stature with a black eagle on his shield and riding on a great horse; a knight whose course about the battlefield was tracked with a long line of slain; and the frightened Franks

seeing the marvels which he did, stayed in their flight, saying one to another, with bated breath for wonderment, "It is Olger the Dane!" till the whisper grew to a cry, and the cry to a great battle-shout that rent the air, "Olger the Dane! Olger the Dane!" as rushing fearless on the foe they swept the Paynim from the field as a tide sweeps litter from its course. Again and again did Olger lead the Franks to victory, nor rested he from battle till France was free again and Holy Church was stablished, and the spirit of chivalry had revived as in the olden time. While he fought the torch burned fiercely in the church of St. Faron of Meaux, but when he stayed his hand it dwindled to a spark again.

Covered with glory and renown, Sir Olger came at length to court. The King of France was dead, and the queen loved the knight for his bravery and gentleness. One day while he slept upon a couch within the banquet chamber of the palace, the queen came to him and one of her dames of honor, named the Lady of Senlis, withdrew the ring from his finger. They were frightened to see the strong man wither to an ancient dried-up skeleton. But the queen, knowing thereby of a truth that it was Olger the Dane, caused the ring to be immediately replaced and he regained his former youth. Howbeit the Lady of Senlis loved Sir Olger as well as the queen, and finding he cared nothing for her love, she determined at least to hinder him from wedding with her rival. So she sent thirty strong knights to waylay him as he passed out from the palace, charging them to seize

[illegible]

[illegible] Sir Ogier took the queen [illegible] through the bending throng [illegible] together kneeled upon [illegible]

Suddenly there shone a light, brighter than all the gold and jewels, and Morgan le Fay, clothed in a shining [illegible] so dazzling that none might bear to look thereon, floated down upon a white cloud, and caught away Sir Ogier. And the cloud received them both, and wrapping them from mortal sight went up and waned

into thin air and vanished in the church, so that whither they went no man can tell.

But Olger the Dane is not dead. For the torch still burns in the treasure-house of the Abbey of St. Faron of Meaux. He only dreams in the arms of Morgan le Fay in the faery land of Avalon, and one day he will waken and come back.

When men fail in the land of the Franks in time of sore distress, when her armies fall upon the field and the spirit of her people is all broken in the battle fight, when there is none to lead her children against the stranger and the spoiler of her land, Morgan le Fay will pity her and raise up her old champion, and the Dane shall come back on his mighty battle-horse to trample down the enemy. Then shall the Franks again shout "Olger the Dane!" and like an angry flood sweep down upon the foe.

ROLAND

By Sir George W. Cox and Eustace Hinton Jones

CHARLES the great king had tarried with his host seven years in Spain, until he conquered all the land down to the sea, and his banners were riddled through with battle-marks. There remained neither burg nor castle the walls whereof he brake not down, save only Zaragoz, a fortress on a rugged mountain top, so steep and strong that he could not take it. There dwelt the Pagan King Marsilius, who feared not God but served Apollyon and Mahound.

Send an ambassage and say we will give him great treasure in gold and cattle, hawk and hound; say we will be his vassals, do him service at his call; say we will be baptized, forsake our gods and call upon his God: say anything, so long as it will persuade him to rise up with his host and quit our land. Fear nothing, promises cost little; only promise large enough and we shall gain our ends. Wherefore let us choose out messengers to go to Charles and say after this manner: 'Marsilius sends greeting to the mighty Charles. Thy servant Marsilius owns thy power, and that it is vain to strive against thee. But he would make a league with thee. Marsilius will renounce his gods, be baptized into Christendom, do thee homage and henceforth be thy vassal. Only make not war upon him, but depart in peace to thine own land and go to Aachen, and there keep the feast of St. Michael. Thither thy servant Marsilius will haste to meet thee to perform all his covenant; and with him he will bring tribute, many lions and hounds, seven hundred camels, and a thousand moulted falcons; four hundred harnessed mules, and fifty chariots laden with gold and silver.' By my right hand and beard, I swear we shall be rid of him. He will gather his warriors together and go back to his own people. He will want hostages, perchance, for the fulfilment of our covenant. Let him have them. Let him have ten or twenty of our sons; he shall have mine for one. What matters so we save our land? Charles will go back to Aachen and hold the feast, and when the day comes round, will find we have

beguiled him. Then he will wax furiously wroth and slay our hostages. What then? Verily, it is better that a score of lads should lose their heads than that we should lose fair Spain. Better a score of us go childless than that all should come to beggary."

And all the Pagans said, "It is well spoken."

Now Charles and his host were pitched before Cordova, besieging it. And King Marsilius chose out Blancandrin, and with him nine of the cruellest of his peers who likewise would give their sons to be hostages, to go upon this errand. At the king's command men led forth ten white mules with golden bridles, and saddles trapped about with silver; and he gave olive-branches to the messengers to bear in their hands withal in token of peace and friendship, and sent them on their journey to go and make to Charles all the fair promises which Blancandrin had counselled.

Charles the Emperor held festival before Cordova, and rejoiced, he and his host, because they had taken the city. They had overthrown its walls; they had gotten much booty, both of gold and silver and rich raiment; they had put cables round about its towers and dragged them down. Not a Pagan remained in the city; for they were all either slain or turned Christian. The emperor sat among his knights in a green pleasance. Round about him were Roland his nephew, captain of his host, and Oliver, and Duke Sampson; proud Anseis, Geoffrey of Anjou the king's standard-bearer, and fifteen thousand of the noblest born of gentle France. Some lounged

upon the white cloth of damask spread upon the grass; wise warriors of sober years sate round the chess-tables, wrapped in the plotting of their game; the younger and more agile tilted on the green. Beneath a pine-tree where a rose-briar twined, sat Charles the Great, ruler of France, upon a chair of gold. White and long was his beard; huge of limb and hale of body was the king, and of noble countenance. It needed not that any man should ask his fellow, saying, "Which is the king?" for all might plainly know him for the ruler of his people.

So when the messengers of King Marsilius came into his presence, they knew him straightway, and lighted quickly down from their mules and came meekly bending at his feet. Then said Blancandrin, "God save the king, the glorious king whom all men ought to worship. My master King Marsilius sends greeting to the great Charles, whose power no man can withstand, and he prays thee make peace with him. Marsilius offers gifts of bears and lions and leashed hounds, seven hundred camels and a thousand moulted falcons, of gold and silver so much as four hundred mules harnessed to fifty chariots can draw, with all his treasure of jewels. Only make the peace and get thee to Aachen, and my master will meet thee there at the feast of St. Michael; and he will be thy man henceforth in service and worship, and hold Spain of thee; in sooth, all that he hath will he hold of thee; thou shalt be his lord, and thy God shall be his God."

The emperor bowed his head the while he thought

upon the purport of the message; for he never spake a hasty word, and never went back from a word once spoken. Having mused awhile he raised his head and answered, "The King Marsilius is greatly my enemy. In what manner shall I be assured that he will keep his covenant?" The messengers said, "Great king, we offer hostages of good faith, the children of our noblest. Take ten or twenty as it seemeth good to thee; but treat them tenderly, for verily at the feast of St. Michael our king will redeem his pledge, and come to Aachen to be baptized and pay his homage and his tribute."

Then the king commanded a pavilion to be spread wherein to lodge them for the night. And on the morrow, after they had taken their journey home, and the king had heard mass and matins, he called his barons to

we been in Spain, and now only Zaragoz holds out against us. Be not slack to finish what has been so long a-doing and is wellnigh done. Gather the host; lay siege to Zaragoz with all thy might, and avenge the blood of Basant and Basil; conquer the last stronghold of the Pagans; so win Spain, and end this long and weary war."

But Ganelon drew near to the king and spake: "Heed not the counsel of any babbler, unless it be to thine own profit. What has Marsilius promised? Will he not give up his gods, himself, his service and his treasure? Could man ask more? Could we get more by fighting him? How glorious would it be to go to war with a beaten man who offers thee his all! How wise to wage a war to win what one can get without! Roland is wholly puffed up with the pride of fools. He counsels battle for his glory's sake. What careth he how many of us be slain in a causeless fight, if he can win renown? Roland is a brave man; brave enough and strong enough to save his skin, and so is reckless of our lives."

Then said Duke Naymes (a better vassal never stood before a king), "Ganelon has spoken well, albeit bitterly. Marsilius is altogether vanquished, and there is no more glory in fighting him. Spurn not him who sues at thy feet for pity. Make peace, and let this long war end." And all the Franks answered, "The counsel is good."

So Charles said, "Who will go up to Zaragoz to

King Marsilius, and bear my glove and staff and make the covenant with him?"

Duke Naymes said straightway, "I will go"; but the king answered, "Nay, thou shalt not go. Thou art my right hand in counsel and I cannot spare thee." Then said Roland, "Send me." But Count Oliver, his dear companion, said, "What! send thee upon a peaceful errand? Hot-blooded as thou art, impatient of all parleying? Nay, good Roland, thou wouldst spoil any truce. Let the king send me."

Charles stroked his long white beard and said, "Hold your peace, both of you; neither shall go."

Then arose Archbishop Turpin and said, "Let me go. I am eager to see this Pagan Marsilius and his heathen band. I long to baptize them all, and make

sable fur from his neck, said fiercely to Roland, "Men know full well that I am thy step-father, and that there is no love between us; but thou art a fool thus openly to show thy malice. If God but give me to return alive, I will requite thee."

Roland answered, "I hear thy words and despise them. These men well know I had no thought of malice. The errand is honorable, and needs a man both skilful and complaisant of speech. Be proud if the king adjudges it to thee."

Then spake Ganelon, "I should not go at thy bidding: thou hast never gone or come at mine. Thou art not my son nor am I thy sire. Let Charles command me, I will do his service. But thou shalt repent of this." Thereat Roland laughed aloud. And Ganelon, when he heard him laugh, turned in a rage and said, "You shall repent of this!" Then he came bending to King Charles, "Rightful emperor, I am ready to go up to Zaragoz, albeit no messenger ever returned thence alive. But I pray thee for my boy Baldwin, who is yet young, that thou wilt care for him. Is he not the son of thy sister whom I wedded? Let him have my lands and honors, and train him up among thy knights if I return no more."

Charles answered, "Be not so faint-hearted; take the glove and baton, since the Franks have awarded it to thee, and go, do my bidding." Ganelon said, "Sire, this is Roland's doing. All my life have I hated him; and I like no better his companion, Oliver. And as for

the twelve champion peers of France, who stand by him in all he does, and in whose eyes Roland can do no wrong, I defy them all, here and now."

Charles smoothed his snowy beard and said, "Verily Count Ganelon thou hast an ill humor. Wert thou as valiant of fight as thou art of speech, the twelve peers perchance might tremble. But they laugh. Let them. Thy tongue may prove of better service to us upon this mission than their swords." Then the king drew off the glove from his right hand, and held it forth; but Ganelon, when he went to take it, let it fall upon the ground. Thereat the Franks murmured, and said one to another, "This is an evil omen, and bodes ill for the message." But Ganelon picked it up quickly, saying, "Fear not: you shall all hear tidings of it." And Ganelon said

his court. Ganelon also spake bitterly of Roland and his eagerness for war, and how he continually drave the king to battle, and was the fiercest of all the Franks against the pagans. Then after they had rested, they gat to horse again, and Ganelon rode with Blancandrin a little apart from the rest. And Blancandrin said to Ganelon, "Shall we have peace?" Ganelon said, "He that sueth for peace often seeketh opportunity for war." Blancandrin answered, "He that beareth peace to his master's enemies often desireth to be avenged of his own." Then each of the two men knew the other to be a rogue; and they made friends, and opened their hearts to each other, and each spake of what was in his mind, and they laid their plans. So it befell that when they came to Zaragoz, Blancandrin took Ganelon by the hand, and led him to King Marsilius, saying, "O King! who holdest thy power of Mohammed and Apollyon, we have borne thy message to the haughty Charles, but he answered never a word. He only raised his hands on high to his God, and held his peace; but he has sent the noble Count Ganelon, at whose mouth we shall hear whether we may have peace or no."

Then Ganelon, who had well considered beforehand what he should say, began, "God save the worthy King Marsilius. Thus saith the mighty Charles through me his messenger: 'So thou wilt become a Christian, I will give thee the half of Spain to hold of me in feof, and thou shalt pay me tribute and be my servant. Otherwise I will come suddenly and take the land away by force,

and will bring thee to Aachen, to my court, and will there put thee to death.' "

When King Marsilius heard this, the color went from his face, and he snatched a javelin by the shaft, and poised it in his hand. Ganelon watched him, his fingers playing the while with the sword-hilt underneath his mantle, and he said, "Great king, I have given my message and have freed me of my burden. Let the bearer of such a message die if so it seemeth good to thee. But I dared not leave this land, for all the gold God made, without delivering my master's message. What shall it profit thee to slay the messenger? Will that wipe out the message, or bring a gentler one? Or thinkest thou Charles careth not for his barons? Read now the writing of King Charles the Great." Therewith he gave into

hand and brought him against the king. And the king said, "Good Sir Ganelon, I was wrong to be angry; but I will make amends. I will give thee five hundred pieces of gold in token of my favor." Ganelon answered, "He that taketh not counsel to his own profit is a fool. God forbid I should so ill requite thy bounty as to say thee nay."

Marsilius said, "Charles is very old. For years and years he has fought and conquered, and put down kings and taken their lands, and heaped up riches more than can be counted. Is he not yet weary of war, nor tired of conquest, nor satisfied with his riches?" Ganelon answered, "Charles has long been tired of war; but Roland, his captain, is a covetous man, and greedy of possessions. He and his companion Oliver, and the twelve peers of France, continually do stir up the king to war. These lead the king to do whatsoever it listeth them; but he is become old and feeble, and is aweary of them, and fain would rest. Were these but slain, the world would be at peace. But they have under them full twenty thousand men, the pick of all the host of France, and they are very terrible in war."

Marsilius spake to him again, saying, "Tell me; I have four hundred thousand warriors, better men were never seen: would not these suffice to fight with Charles?"

Ganelon answered, "Nay; what folly is this! Heed wiser counsel. Send back the hostages to Charles with me. Then will Charles gather his host together, and depart out of Spain, and go to Aachen, there to await the

fulfilment of thy covenant. But he will leave his rear-guard of twenty thousand, together with Roland and Oliver and the Twelve, to follow after him. Fall thou on these with all thy warriors; let not one escape. So shall the pride of Charles be broken; for the strength of his army is not in his host, but in these, and in Roland his right arm. Destroy them, and thou mayest choose thy terms of peace, for Charles will fight no more. The rear-guard will take their journey by the pass of Siza, along the narrow Valley of Roncesvalles. Wherefore surround the valley with thy host, and lie in wait for them. They will fight hard, but in vain."

Then Marsilius made him swear upon the book of the law of Mohammed, and upon his sword handle, that all should happen as he had said. Thus Ganelon did

Roland

Night fell and the king lay down to sleep. And as he slept he dreamed he was in the pass of Siza with no weapon in his hand save an ashen spear; and Count Ganelon came and snatched it from his hand and brake it into splinters. After that he dreamed he was in his royal city, and a viper came and fastened on his hand; and while he tried to shake it off, and could not, a leopard sprang on him and gat him down and would have slain him, but that a faithful hound leaped straightway on the leopard and gripped him by the ear. Then the dog and the leopard fought a terrible combat; but which of the twain overcame the other he could not tell. For the king tossed upon his bed in a sweat with the anguish of his dream; and he awaked and saw the sun shine brightly all about, and knew it was a dream.

But the king arose and gathered to him his host to go away to keep the feast of Saint Michael at Aachen, and to meet Marsilius there. And Olger the Dane made he captain of the vanguard of his army which should go with him. Then said the king to Ganelon, "Whom shall I make captain of the rear-guard which I leave behind?" Ganelon answered, "Roland; for there is none like him in all the host." Then Roland said to his uncle the king, "Give me the bow that is in thy hand; I will not let it fall as Ganelon did the glove and staff. Trust me." So Charles made Roland captain of the rear-guard, and gave the bow into his hand. With Roland there remained behind, Oliver, his dear comrade, and the twelve peers, and Turpin the Archbishop, who for love

of Roland would fain go with him, and twenty thousand proven warriors. Then said the king to his nephew, "Good Roland, behold, the half of my army have I given thee in charge. See thou keep them safely." Roland answered, "Fear nothing. I shall render good account of them."

So they took leave of one another, and the king and his host marched forward till they reached the borders of Spain. They had to travel along steep and dangerous mountain ways, and down through silent valleys made gloomy with toppling crags. And ever as the king thought upon his nephew whom he left behind, his heart grew heavy with an ill foreboding. So they came into Gascoigny and saw their own lands again. But Charles would not be comforted, for being come into France he would sit with his face wrapped in his mantle, thinking

valley sides were overspread with them, for multitude like blades of grass upon a pasture; and the murmur of the pagan host rose to them on the mountain as the murmur of a sea. Then when they saw that Ganelon had played them false, Oliver spake to Roland, "What shall we now do because of this treason? For this is a greater multitude of pagans than has ever been gathered together in the world before. And they will certainly give us battle." Roland answered, "God grant it; for sweet it is to do our duty for our king. This will we do: when we have rested we will go forward." Then said Oliver, "We are but a handful. These are in number as the sands of the sea. Be wise; take now your horn, good comrade, and sound it; peradventure Charles may hear, and come back with his host to succor us." But Roland answered, "The greater the number the more glory. God forbid I should sound my horn and bring Charles back with his barons, and lose my good name, and bring disgrace upon us all. Fear not the numbers of the host; I promise you they shall repent of coming here; they are as good as dead already in my mind." Three times Oliver urged him to sound his horn, but Roland would not, for he said, "God and His angels are on our side; through Him we shall do great wonders, and He will not see us put to shame before His enemies." Yet again Oliver pleaded, for he had mounted up into a pine tree and seen more of the multitude that came against them; far as the eye could see they reached; and he prayed Roland to come and see also. But he would

not; "Time enough," he said, "to know their numbers when we come to count the slain. We will make ready for battle."

Then Archbishop Turpin gathered the band of warriors about him, and said, "It is a right good thing to die for king and faith; and verily this day we all shall do it. But have no fear of death. For we shall meet to-night in Paradise, and wear the martyr's crown. Kneel now, confess your sins, and pray God's mercy." Then the Franks kneeled on the ground while the archbishop shrived them clean and blessed them in the name of God. And after that he bade them rise, and, for penance, go scourge the pagans.

Roland ranged his trusty warriors and went to and fro among them riding upon his battle-horse Veillantif; by his side his good sword Durendal. Small need had he to exhort them in extremity; there was not a man but loved him unto death and cheerfully would follow where he led. He looked upon the pagan host, and his countenance waxed fierce and terrible; he looked upon his band, and his face was mild and gentle. He said, "Good comrades, lords, and barons, let no man grudge his life to-day; but only see he sells it dear. A score of pagans is a poor price for one of us. I have promised to render good account of you. I have no fear. The battlefield will tell, if we cannot. God knows the issue of the fight, but we know that much glory and worship await us upon earth and crowns in Paradise." Then he gave the word, "Go forward!" and with his golden

spurs pricked Veillantif. So, foremost, he led the rear-guard down the mountain-side, down through the pass of Siza into the Valley of Death called Roncesvalles. Close following came Oliver, Archbishop Turpin, and the valiant Twelve; the guard pressing forward with the shout "Montjoy!" and bearing the snow-white banner of their king aloft.

Marvellous and fierce was the battle. That was a good spear Roland bare; for it crashed through fifteen pagan bodies, through brass and hide and bone, before the trusty ash brake in its hand, or ever he was fain to draw Durendal from his sheath. The Twelve did wondrously; nay, every man of the twenty thousand fought with lionlike courage; neither counted any man his life dear to him. Archbishop Turpin, resting for a moment to get fresh breath, cried out, "Thank God to see the rear-guard fight to-day!" then spurred in again among them. Roland saw Oliver still fighting with the truncheon of his spear and said, "Comrade, draw thy sword," but he answered, "Not while a handful of the stump remains. Weapons are precious to-day."

For hours they fought, and not a Frank gave way. Wheresoever a man planted his foot, he kept the ground or died. The guard hewed down the pagans by crowds, till the earth was heaped with full two hundred thousand heathen dead. Of those kings which banded together by oath to fight him, Roland gave good account, for he laid them all dead about him in a ring, and Durendal to its hilt reeked blood. But many thousands of the

Franks were slain, and of the Twelve there now remained but two.

Marsilius looked upon his shattered host and saw them fall back in panic, for they were dismayed because of the Franks. But Marsilius heard the sound of trumpets from the mountain top and a glad man was he; for twenty strong battalions of Saracens were come to his help, and these poured down the valley-side. Seeing this, the rest of the pagans took heart again, and they all massed about the remnant of the guard, and shut them in on every hand. Nevertheless Roland and his fast lessening band were not dismayed. So marvellously they fought, so many thousand pagans hurled they down, making grim jests the while as though they played at war for sport, that their enemies were in mortal fear and doubted greatly if numbers would suffice to overwhelm these men, for it misgave them whether God's angels were not come down to the battle. But the brave rear-guard dwindled away, and Roland scarce dared turn his eyes to see the handful that remained. Dead were the Twelve, dead was Duke Samson, dead Engeler of Gascoigny, and proud Duke Anseis, Gerin, and his companion Gerard, Guise, and Berenger, with all the flower of the guard.

Then Roland spake to Oliver, "Comrade, I will sound my horn, if peradventure Charles may hear and come to us." But Oliver was angry, and answered, "It is now too late. Hadst thou but heeded me in time, much weeping might have been spared the women of

France, Charles should not have lost his guard, nor France her valiant Roland." "Talk not of what might have been," said Archbishop Turpin, "but blow thy horn. Charles cannot come in time to save our lives, but he will certainly come and avenge them."

Then Roland put the horn to his mouth and blew a great blast. Far up the valley went the sound and smote against the mountain tops; these flapped it on from ridge to ridge for thirty leagues. Charles heard it in his hall and said, "Listen! what is that? Surely our men do fight to-day." But Ganelon answered the king: "What folly is this! It is only the sighing of the wind among the trees."

Weary with battle Roland took the horn again and winded it with all his strength. So long and mighty was the blast, the veins stood out upon his forehead in great cords; he blew on till with the strain his brain-pan brake asunder at the temples. Charles heard it in his palace and cried, "Hark! I hear Roland's horn. He is in battle or he would not sound it." Ganelon answered, "Too proud is he to sound it in battle. My lord the king groweth old and childish in his fears. What if it be Roland's horn? He hunteth perchance in the woods. Forsooth a merry jest it would be for him were the king to make ready for war and gather his thousands, and find Roland at his sport, hunting a little hare!"

The blood ran fast down Roland's face, and in sore pain and heaviness he lifted the horn to his mouth and feebly winded it again. Charles heard it in his palace, and

[illegible]

[illegible] Margaris, the pagan king, [illegible] where Oliver was fighting [illegible]. But Oliver turned, and swung his sword Hauteclere, and before he [illegible] through the helmet to his neck. Yet even when the pains of death got hold on Oliver so

that his eyes grew dim and he knew no man, he never ceased striking out on every side with his sword and calling "Montjoy!" Then Roland hasted to his help, and cutting the pagans down for a wide space about, came to his old companion to lift him from his horse. But Oliver struck him a blow that brake the helm to shivers on his throbbing head. Nevertheless Roland for all his pain took him tenderly down and spake with much gentleness, saying, "Dear comrade, I fear me thou art in an evil case." Oliver said, "Thy voice is like Roland's voice; but I cannot see thee." Roland answered, "It is I, thy comrade." Then he said, "Forgive me, that I smote thee. It is so dark I cannot see thy face; give me thy hand; God bless thee, Roland; God bless Charles, and France!" So saying he fell upon his face and died.

A heavy-hearted man was Roland; little recked he for his life since Oliver his good comrade was parted from him. Then he turned and looked for the famous rear-guard of King Charles the Great.

Only two men were left beside himself.

Turpin the Archbishop, Count Gaulter, and Roland set themselves together with the fixed intent to sell their lives as dearly as they might; and when the pagans ran upon them in a multitude with shouts and cries, Roland slew twenty, Count Gaulter six, and Turpin five. Then the pagans drew back and gathered together all the remnant of their army, forty thousand horsemen and a thousand footmen with spears and javelins, and charged upon the three. Count Gaulter fell at the first shock. The

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with spear-points, yet not so much as a scratch upon his body. Stunned with the fall he lay there in a swoon. The pagans came and looked on him, and gave him up for dead. Then they left him and made all speed to flee before Charles should come. In haste they gat them up the mountain sides and left the gloomy valley piled with dead, and fled away toward Spain.

Roland lifted his eyes and beheld the pagans filing up the mountain passes; and he was left alone among the dead. Then in great pain he drew his limbs from underneath his horse, and gat upon his feet, but scarce could stand for the anguish of his brain beating against his temples. He dragged himself about the valley, and looked upon his dead friends and comrades. Round about each one there lay a full score of pagan corpses, and Roland said, "Charles will see that the guard has done its duty." He came to where Oliver lay, and he lifted the body tenderly in his arms, saying, "Dear comrade, thou wast ever a good and gentle friend to me; better warrior brake never a spear, nor wielded sword; wise wert thou of counsel, and I repent me that once only I hearkened not to thy voice. God rest thy soul! A sweeter friend and truer comrade no man ever had than thou." Then Roland heard a feeble voice, and turned and was ware of Archbishop Turpin. Upon the ground he lay a-dying, a piteous sight to see; his face all marred with wounds, his body wellnigh hewed in twain, insomuch that his bowels came forth before his eyes: howbeit, he raised his trembling hands and blessed the

brave dead about him in the dear name of God. And when Turpin beheld Roland, his eyes were satisfied. He said, "Dear Roland, thank God the field is thine and mine. We have fought a good fight." Then joined he his hands as though he fain would pray, and Roland, seeing the archbishop like to faint for the sharpness of his distress, took and dragged himself to a running stream that he espied pass through the valley; and he dipped up water in his horn to bring to him, but could not, for he fell upon the bank and swooned. And when he came to himself, and crawled to where the archbishop lay, he found him with his hands still clasped, but having neither thirst nor any pain, for he was at rest. A lonesome man in the Valley of Death, Roland wept for the last of his friends.

But the brain began to ooze out from his temples, and his pain grew very grievous to be borne. And Roland, when he found death coming on him, took his sword Durendal in one hand, and his horn in the other, and crawled away about a bow-shot to a green hillock whereupon four diverse marble steps were built beneath the trees. There he lay down in his agony. A certain Saracen was plundering there among the dead, and watched till Roland ceased to moan in his pain; then, thinking there was no more breath in him, the thief stole softly up, and seeing the glitter of the hilt of Durendal, put forth his hand and drew it from its sheath. Roland lifted his eyes and saw the thief bend over him with the sword in his hand. He seized the horn from beside

him, and dealt the man a blow upon the crown that brake his skull.

Then he took Durendal into his hands, and prayed that it might not fall into the power of his enemies. He said, "O Durendal, how keen of edge, how bright of blade thou art! God sent thee by his angel to King Charles, to be his captain's sword. Charles girt thee at my side. How many countries thou hast conquered for him in my hands! O Durendal, though it grieves me sore, I had rather break thee than that pagan hands should wield thee against France." Then he besought that God would now eke out his strength to break the sword; and lifting it in his hands he smote mightily upon the topmost marble step. The gray stone chipped and splintered, but the good blade brake not, neither was its edge turned. He smote the second step, which was of sardonyx; the blade bit it, and leaped back, but blunted not, nor brake. The third step was of gray adamant; he smote it with all his might; the adamant powdered where he struck, but the sword brake not, nor lost its edge. And when he could no more lift the sword, his heart smote him that he had tried to break the holy blade; and he said, "O Durendal, I am to blame; the angels gave thee; they will keep thee safe for Charles and France!"

Then Roland, when he felt death creep upon him, lay down and set his face toward Spain and toward his enemies, that men should plainly see he fell a conqueror. Beneath him he put the sword and horn; then

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lifted he his weary hands to Heaven and
and while he mused God sent His swift
briel and Michael, to bear his soul to Par

Gloom fell; the mists went up, and
death and silence in the valley. The lo
setting in the west.

Charles and his host rode hard, and
until they reached the mountain top, and
on the valley of Roncesvalles. They blew
but there was no sound, neither any that a
the ringing mountain sides. Then down th
and mist they rode, and saw the field; saw
and Oliver; the archbishop and the twelve
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saw how fiercely they had fought, how hard

There was not one in all the king's host
his voice and wept for pity at the sight they

But Charles the King is fallen ... land's body ...

land from his mother's arms. He had brought him up and nourished him, had taught him war, and watched him grow the bravest knight, the stanchest captain of his host. Right gladly would he have given Spain and the fruits of all the seven years' war to have Roland back again. Tears came, but brought no words; and God sent sleep to comfort him for his heaviness. And while the king slumbered, the angel Gabriel came and strengthened him, and showed what should shortly come to pass, and bade him rise and follow after the pagans. The king arose and saw that the low red sun was not yet set; for God made a miracle in the firmament, so that the sun stood still in the heavens, and went not down till he was avenged of his enemies. Duke Naymes said, "Coming down the pass I saw a cloud of dust across the mountains on the other side. That was the pagan host fleeing to Zaragoz."

Then having watered and pastured their horses, the king left four good knights in Roncesvalles to guard the dead from birds and beasts of prey, and set out in chase of the pagans.

In the Vale of Tenebrus the Franks overtook them, hard by the broad, swift river Ebro. There being hemmed in, the river in front and the fierce Franks behind, the pagans were cut to pieces; not one escaped, save Marsilius and a little band who had taken another way and got safe to Zaragoz. Thence Marsilius sent letters to Baligant, King of Babylon, who ruled forty kingdoms, praying him to come over and help him. And

[illegible]

Then after this Marsilius and Baligant came out to battle with King Charles before the walls of Zaragoz. But the king utterly destroyed the pagans there and slew King Baligant and King Marsilius, and brake down the gates of Zaragoz and took the city. So he conquered Spain and avenged himself for Roland and his guard.

But when King Charles would go back again to France his heart grew exceeding heavy. He said, "O Roland, my good friend, I have no more pleasure in this land which we have conquered. When I come again to Laon, to my palace, and men ask tidings, they will hear how many cities and kingdoms we have taken; but no man will rejoice. They will say, Count Roland our good Captain is dead, and great sadness will fall on all the

realm. O Roland, my friend, when I come again to Aachen, to my chapel, and men ask tidings, they will hear that we have won a land and lost the best captain in all France; and they will weep and mourn, and say the war has been in vain. O Roland, my friend, would God that I had died for thee!"

Now when the people of France heard how King Charles the Great returned victorious, they gathered together in great multitudes to welcome him. And when Hilda, the fair maid whom Roland loved, heard it, she arrayed herself in her richest apparel and tired her hair with eager pains, and proudly decked herself with her jewels. For she said, "I would be pleasing in the eyes of my brave true captain who comes home to wed with me. To-day I am his bride! There is no gladder heart in France than mine. Who will not envy me, the bride of the brave captain whose name will be on every lip to-day?" Then she hasted and came merrily to the palace. And the king's guards all drew back for fear and let her pass, for they dared not speak a word to her. Right proudly walked she through them, for she thought, "This honor is all for Roland's sake;" and proudly came she to the king, saying,—"Roland, the captain of the host, where is he? Seven long years have I waited, so patiently, while he fought the battles of the king. I never murmured; no, I am too proud of him and of France and of the king. But to-day he is mine. The king will give him to me to-day."

And Charles feared exceedingly and scarce could see

by name. He said: "Dear maiden, sweet friend, am I God that I can bring the dead back? Roland my nephew is dead; Roland my captain and my friend is dead. Nay, these times are heavy with us all, and when my heart is healed I will give thee Ludwig mine own son, who will sit after me upon the throne. Take Ludwig in his stead."

But [illegible]: He takes the broken-hearted woman.

Hilda cried out, and swooned. The colour faded from her face, and straightway she fell dead at the king's feet.

Charles and his barons wept for pity at her doleful case; and the king came down from his throne and lifted the maiden in his arms and laid her head upon his shoulder. And when he found of a truth that death had taken the gentle maid, he called four countesses and bade them see that she was interred right worshipfully. They made a noble bier and lifted Hilda thereupon and bore her to a nunnery. They set it in the midst of the chancel, so that she might lie there in her robes and jewels as she died; and all that night they sang sweet masses for her soul's good rest. At prime they buried her beneath the altar pavement.

It is written in the old chronicle, that after these things Charles sent and summoned many men from many lands to come and try if Ganelon had done him a treason or no; for the twenty thousand who were betrayed being dead and the pagans utterly destroyed, there was

none left to bear witness against him. So the king sent and fetched Ganelon up out of prison and set him on his trial. Howbeit Ganelon contrived to get thirty of his kinsfolk chosen among his judges, and chief of them Pinabel, a man of great stature and strength of limb. Moreover, Pinabel was a ready man to pick a quarrel with any; a man cunning of tongue and very rich and powerful, so that people feared him greatly. These thirty Ganelon bribed, with part of the price he took from King Marsilius for the treason, to give judgment for him. Then Pinabel and the others went to and fro among the judges and persuaded them, saying: "We have no witnesses, only Ganelon himself, and what saith he? He owns he hated Roland, and for that cause he challenged Roland, in the presence of the king and all his court, to fight when he returned from his mission. The open challenger is not the betrayer in secret. Moreover, had he done this thing, would Ganelon have come back again to King Charles? Besides, would any man betray an army of his friends to rid himself of a single enemy? Blood enough has been shed. Slaying Ganelon will not bring Roland back. The Franks are angry since they have lost their captain, and blindly clamor for a victim. Heed not their foolish cry, for Ganelon has done no treason." To this the others all agreed, save Tierry, the son of Duke Geoffrey; and he would not.

The judges came to King Charles and said, "We find that Ganelon has done nothing worthy of death. Let him live and take anew the oath of fealty to France

and the king." Then the king was grieved, and said, "It misgives me you have played me false. In my esteem the judgment is not just. Nevertheless, it is judgment: only God can alter it."

Then stepped forth the youth Tierry, Geoffrey's son. He was but a lad, very little and slender of body, and slight of limb. And he said, "Let not the king be sad. I Tierry do impeach Ganelon as a felon and a traitor who betrayed Roland and the rear-guard to the pagans, and I also say that thirty of Ganelon's kinsfolk have wrought treason and corrupted judgment. And this will I maintain with my sword, and prove upon the body of any man who will come to defend him or them." Thereto to pledge himself he drew off his right glove and gave it to the king for a gage.

Pinabel strode forward, a giant among the throng. He looked down upon the lad Tierry and despised him; he came to the king and gave his glove, saying, "I will fight this battle to the death." The Franks pitied Tierry and feared for him, for they had hoped Naymes or Olger or some mighty champion would have undertaken the cause, and not a stripling. But Charles the King said, "God will show the right." So they made ready the lists; and the king commanded Ganelon and his thirty kinsmen to be held in pledge against the issue.

The battle was done in a green meadow near to Aachen in presence of the king and his barons and a great multitude of people. First the men rode together and tilted till their spears brake and the saddle-girths gave

way; then they left their steeds and fought on foot. Tierry was wonderous quick and agile, and wearied Pinabel at the outset by his swift sword-play; but Tierry's hand was weak against his sturdy adversary, and his sword point pierced not mail nor shield. Pinabel clave his helm and hewed great pieces off his mail, but could not slay him. Then said Pinabel, "Fool, why should I kill thee? Give up the battle and the cause, and I will be thy man henceforth in faith and fealty. It shall prove greatly for thy profit to reconcile Ganelon and the king."

Tierry answered, "I will not parley; God will surely show whether of us twain be right! Guard thyself." So they fell to again, and all men saw that nothing would now part them till one was dead; and straightway they gave the lad Tierry up for lost. Pinabel's sword was heavy, and great the strength of his arm. He smote Tierry a blow upon the helm that sliced off visor and ventailles and with it the youth's right cheek. But while his blood ran down upon the grass, Tierry lifted up his sword and struck the brown steel helm of Pinabel. God put His might into the young man's arm, for the blade cleft steel and skull, and entered Pinabel's brain, so that he reeled and dropped down dead. Then all the people shouted, "God hath spoken! Away with Ganelon and his fellows."

Then King Charles raised up his hands to heaven and gave thanks, and taking Tierry in his arms embraced him for joy, and with his own hands took off his armor, and he set the noblest in the land to tend his wounds.

King Charles sat in judgment in his palace at Aachen. He said, "Take the thirty kinsmen of Ganelon, perverters of justice, let not one escape, and hang them." Blithely the Franks obeyed his word.

Then the king commanded four horses to be brought. Andt hen tied ropes round Ganelon's wrists and ankles, and harnessed the horses to them. The traitor lay and whined and begged for life with tears and promises and cries. But the very steeds arched up their necks in pride to do a pleasant work. No whip they needed, but only to be loosed, and quick they tare the traitor limb from limb upon the grass. So died Ganelon as he lived, a coward. Thus Charles the King made an end of his vengeance for his guard.

Now after these things were accomplished, and when Charles was grown very old and decrepit and the years fell heavy on him, the angel Gabriel came to the king as he slept, saying, "Arise and go into Syria to succor King Vivian, for the pagans do hard beset him!" Charles sat up in his bed and sighed, "Have pity on thy servant! So weary is my life; and I would fain go home to God."

The old king wept and feebly plucked his snowy beard.

This is the gest which Turold used to sing.

When William the Norman fought at Hastings, Taillefer his minstrel, who sang full well, rode on before the Norman host and sang of Roland and Great Charles —of Oliver and the brave rear-guard which fell in Roncesvalles.

THE STORY OF KING ARTHUR

By BEATRICE CLAY

BOOK I

THE COMING OF ARTHUR

Chapter I

Of Arthur's Birth; and How He Became King

LONG years ago, there ruled over Britain a king called Uther Pendragon. A mighty prince was he, and feared by all men; yet, when he sought the love of the fair Igraine of Cornwall, she would have naught to do with him, so that, from grief and disappointment, Uther fell sick, and at last seemed like to die.

Now in those days, there lived a famous magician named Merlin, so powerful that he could change his form at will, or even make himself invisible; nor was there any place so remote but that he could reach it at once, merely by wishing himself there. One day, suddenly he stood at Uther's bedside, and said: "Sir King, I know thy grief, and am ready to help thee. Only promise to give me, at his birth, the son that shall be born to thee, and thou shalt have thy heart's desire." To this the king agreed joyfully, and Merlin kept his word: for he gave Uther the form of one whom Igraine had loved dearly, and so she took him willingly for her husband.

When the time had come that a child should be born to the king and queen, Merlin appeared before Uther to remind him of his promise; and Uther swore it should be as he had said. Three days later, a prince was born, and, with pomp and ceremony, was christened by the name of Arthur; but immediately thereafter, the king commanded that the child should be carried to the postern-gate, there to be given to the old man who would be found waiting without.

Not long after, Uther fell sick, and he knew that his end was come; so, by Merlin's advice, he called together his knights and barons, and said to them: "My death draws near. I charge you, therefore, that ye obey my son even as ye have obeyed me; and my curse upon him if he claim not the crown when he is a man grown."

the wonders prophesied of him. He gave the child to the care of the good knight Sir Ector to bring up with his son Kay, but revealed not to him that it was the son of Uther Pendragon that was given into his charge.

At last, when years had passed and Arthur was grown a tall youth well skilled in knightly exercises, Merlin went to the Archbishop of Canterbury and advised him that he should call together at Christmas-time all the chief men of the realm to the great cathedral in London; "For," said Merlin, "there shall be seen a great marvel by which it shall be made clear to all men who is the lawful King of this land." The Archbishop did as Merlin counselled. Under pain of a fearful curse, he bade barons and knights come to London to keep the feast, and to pray heaven to send peace to the realm.

The people hastened to obey the Archbishop's commands, and, from all sides, barons and knights came riding in to keep the birth-feast of our Lord. And when they had prayed, and were coming forth from the cathedral, they saw a strange sight. There, in the open space before the church, stood, on a great stone, an anvil thrust through with a sword; and on the stone were written these words: "Whoso can draw forth this sword, is rightful King of Britain born."

At once there were fierce quarrels, each man clamoring to be the first to try his fortune, none doubting his own success. Then the Archbishop decreed that each should make the venture in turn, from the greatest baron to the least knight; and each in turn, having put forth

his utmost strength, failed to move the sword one inch, and drew back ashamed. So the Archbishop dismissed the company, and having appointed guards to watch over the stone, sent messengers through all the land to give word of great jousts to be held in London at Easter, when each knight could give proof of his skill and courage, and try whether the adventure of the sword was for him.

Among those who rode to London at Easter was the good Sir Ector, and with him his son, Sir Kay, newly made a knight, and the young Arthur. When the morning came that the jousts should begin, Sir Kay and Arthur mounted their horses and set out for the lists; but before they reached the field, Kay looked and saw that he had left his sword behind. Immediately Arthur turned back to fetch it for him, only to find the house fast shut, for all were gone to view the tournament. Sore vexed was Arthur, fearing lest his brother Kay should lose his chance of gaining glory, till, of a sudden, he bethought him of the sword in the great anvil before the cathedral. Thither he rode with all speed, and the guards having deserted their post to view the tournament, there was none to forbid him the adventure. He leaped from his horse, seized the hilt, and instantly drew forth the sword as easily as from a scabbard; then, mounting his horse and thinking no marvel of what he had done, he rode after his brother and handed him the weapon.

When Kay looked at it, he saw at once that it was the wondrous sword from the stone. In great joy he

sought his father, and showing it to him, said: "Then must I be King of Britain." But Sir Ector bade him say how he came by the sword, and when Sir Kay told how Arthur had brought it to him, Sir Ector bent his knee to the boy, and said: "Sir, I perceive that ye are my King, and here I tender you my homage;" and Kay did as his father. Then the three sought the Archbishop, to whom they related all that had happened; and he, much marvelling, called the people together to the great stone, and bade Arthur thrust back the sword and draw it forth again in the presence of all, which he did with ease. But an angry murmur arose from the barons, who cried that what a boy could do, a man could do; so, at the Archbishop's word, the sword was put back, and each man, whether baron or knight, tried in his turn to draw it forth, and failed. Then, for the third time, Arthur drew forth the sword. Immediately there arose from the people a great shout: "Arthur is King! Arthur is King! We will have no King but Arthur;" and, though the great barons scowled and threatened, they fell on their knees before him while the Archbishop placed the crown upon his head, and swore to obey him faithfully as their lord and sovereign.

Thus Arthur was made King; and to all he did justice, righting wrongs and giving to all their dues. Nor was he forgetful of those that had been his friends; for Kay, whom he loved as a brother, he made Seneschal and chief of his household, and to Sir Ector, his foster father, he gave broad lands.

Chapter II

The Round Table

Thus Arthur was made King, but he had to fight for his own; for eleven great kings drew together and refused to acknowledge him as their lord, and chief among the rebels was King Lot of Orkney, who had married Arthur's sister, Bellicent.

By Merlin's advice, Arthur sent for help overseas, to Ban and Bors, the two great kings who ruled in Gaul. With their aid, he overthrew his foes in a great battle near the river Trent; and then he passed with them into their own lands and helped them drive out their enemies. So there was ever great friendship between Arthur and the Kings Ban and Bors, and all their kindred, and

The Story of King Arthur

Among the lesser kings whom Arthur helped to rebuild their towns and restore order, was King Leodegrance of Cameliard. Now Leodegrance had one fair child, his daughter Guenevere; and from the time that first he saw her, Arthur gave her all his love. So he sought counsel of Merlin, his chief adviser. Merlin heard the king sorrowfully, and he said: "Sir King, when a man's heart is set, he may not change. Yet had it been well if ye had loved another."

So the king sent his knights to Leodegrance, to ask of him his daughter; and Leodegrance consented, rejoicing to wed her to so good and knightly a king. With great pomp, the princess was conducted to Canterbury, and there the king met her, and they two were wed by the Archbishop in the great Cathedral, amid the rejoicings of the people.

On that same day did Arthur found his Order of the Round Table, the fame of which was to spread throughout Christendom and endure through all time. Now the Round Table had been made for King Uther Pendragon by Merlin, who had meant thereby to set forth plainly to all men the roundness of the earth. After Uther died, King Leodegrance had possessed it; but when Arthur was wed, he sent it to him as a gift, and great was the king's joy at receiving it. One hundred and fifty knights might take their places about it, and for them Merlin made sieges or seats. One hundred and twenty-eight did Arthur knight at that great feast; thereafter, if any sieges were empty, at the high festival of Pentecost new

knights were ordained to fill them, and by magic was the name of each knight found inscribed, in letters of gold, in his proper siege. One seat only long remained unoccupied, and that was the Siege Perilous. No knight might occupy it until the coming of Sir Galahad; for, without danger to his life, none might sit there who was not free from all stain of sin.

With pomp and ceremony did each knight take upon him the vows of true knighthood: to obey the king; to show mercy to all who asked it; to defend the weak; and for no worldly gain to fight in a wrongful cause: and all the knights rejoiced together, doing honor to Arthur and to his queen. Then they rode forth to right the wrong and help the oppressed, and by their aid, the king held his realm in peace, doing justice to all.

land and recorded the great deeds of Arthur and his knights, had been Merlin's master in magic; but it came to pass in time that Merlin far excelled him in skill, so that his enemies declared no mortal was his father, and called him devil's son.

Then, on a certain time, Merlin said to Arthur: "The time draws near when ye shall miss me, for I shall go down alive into the earth; and it shall be that gladly would ye give your lands to have me again." Then Arthur was grieved, and said: "Since ye know your danger, use your craft to avoid it." But Merlin answered: "That may not be."

Now there had come to Arthur's court, a damsel of the Lady of the Lake—her whose skill in magic, some say, was greater than Merlin's own; and the damsel's name was Vivien. She set herself to learn the secrets of Merlin's art, and was ever with him, tending upon the old man, and with gentleness and tender service, winning her way to his heart; but all was a pretence, for she was weary of him and sought only his ruin, thinking it should be fame for her, by any means whatsoever, to enslave the greatest wizard of his age. And so she persuaded him to pass with her over seas into King Ban's land of Benwick, and there, one day, he showed her a wondrous rock formed by magic art. Then she begged him to enter into it, the better to declare to her its wonders; but when once he was within, by a charm that she had learned from Merlin's self, she caused the rock to shut down that never again might he come forth. Thus was Mer-

lin's prophecy fulfilled, that he should go down into the earth alive. Much they marvelled in Arthur's court what had become of the great magician, till on a time, there rode past the stone a certain Knight of the Round Table and heard Merlin lamenting his sad fate. The knight would have striven to raise the mighty stone, but Merlin bade him not waste his labor, since none might release him save her who had imprisoned him there. Thus Merlin passed from the world through the treachery of a damsel, and thus Arthur was without aid in the days when his doom came upon him.

Chapter IV

Balin and Balan

Among the princes that thought scorn of Arthur in the days when first he became king, none was more insolent than Ryons of North Wales. So, on a time when King Arthur held high festival at Camelot, Ryons sent a herald who, in the presence of the whole court, before brave knights and fair dames, thus addressed the king: "Sir Arthur, my master bids me say that he has overcome eleven kings with all their hosts, and, in token of their submission, they have given him their beards to fringe him a mantle. There remains yet space for the twelfth; wherefore, with all speed, send him your beard, else will he lay waste your land with fire and sword." "Viler message," said King Arthur, "was never sent from man to man. Get thee gone, lest we forget thine

office protects thee." So spoke the king, for he had seen his knights clap hand to sword, and would not that a messenger should suffer hurt in his court.

Now among the knights present the while was one whom men called Balin le Savage, who had but late been freed from prison for slaying a knight of Arthur's court. None was more wroth than he at the villany of Ryons, and immediately after the departure of the herald, he left the hall and armed him; for he was minded to try if, with good fortune, he might win to Arthur's grace by avenging him on the King of North Wales. While he was without, there entered the hall a Witch Lady who, on a certain occasion, had done the king a service, and for this she now desired of him a boon. So Arthur bade her name her request, and thus she said: "O King, I require of you the head of the knight Balin le Savage." "That may I not grant you with my honor," replied the king; "ask what it may become me to give." But the Witch Lady would have naught else, and departed from the hall, murmuring against the king. Then, as it chanced, Balin met her at the door, and immediately when he saw her he rode upon her, sword in hand, and with one blow smote off her head. Thus he took vengeance for his mother's death, of which she had been the cause, and, well content, rode away. But when it was told King Arthur of the deed that Balin had done, he was full wroth, nor was his anger lessened though Merlin declared the wrong the Witch Lady had done to Balin. "Whatsoever cause he had against her, yet should

he have done her no violence in my court," said the king, and bade Sir Lanceour of Ireland ride after Balin and bring him back again.

Thus it came to pass that, as Sir Balin rode on his way, he heard the hoof-beats of a horse fast galloping, and a voice cried loudly to him: "Stay, Knight; for thou shalt stay, whether thou will or not." "Fair Knight," answered Balin fiercely, "dost thou desire to fight with me?" "Yea, truly," answered Lanceour; "for that cause have I followed thee from Camelot." "Alas!" cried Balin, "then I know thy quarrel. And yet, I dealt but justly by that vile woman, and it grieves me to offend my lord King Arthur again." "Have done, and make ready to fight," said Lanceour insolently; for he was proud and arrogant, though a brave

thereby to win his lord's favor again. "I will ride with thee, brother," said Balan, "and help thee all I may."

So the two went on their way till, presently, they met with an old man—Merlin's self, though they knew him not, for he was disguised. "Ah, Knight," said Merlin to Balin, "swift to strike and swift to repent, beware, or thou shalt strike the most dolorous blow dealt by man; for thou shalt slay thine own brother." "If I believed thy words true," cried Balin hotly, "I would slay myself to make thee a liar." "I know the past and I know the future," said Merlin; "I know, too, the errand on which thou ridest, and I will help thee if thou wilt." "Ah!" said Balin, "that pleases me well." "Hide you both in this covert," said Merlin; "for presently there shall come riding down this path King Ryons with sixty of his knights." With these words, he vanished. So Balin and Balan did as he had bidden them, and when King Ryons and his men entered the little path, they fell upon them with such fury that they slew more than forty knights, while the rest fled, and King Ryons himself yielded him to them. So Sir Balan rode with King Ryons to Camelot that he might deliver to King Arthur; but Balin went not with them, for he would see more adventures before he sought King Arthur's presence again.

After many days' travel and many encounters, it befell that, one evening, Balin drew near to a castle; and when he would have sought admittance, there stood by him an old man, and said: "Balin, turn thee back, and

it shall be better for thee," and so vanished. At that moment there was blown a blast on a horn, such as is sounded when the stag receives its death; and hearing it, Balin's heart misgave him, and he cried: "That blast is blown for me, and I am the prize. But not yet am I dead!"

At that instant the castle gate was raised and there appeared many knights and ladies welcoming Balin into the castle. So he entered, and presently they were all seated at supper. Then the lady of the castle said to Balin: "Sir Knight, to-morrow thou must have ado with a knight that keeps an island nearby; else mayest thou not pass that way." "That is an evil custom," answered Balin; "but if I must, I must." So that night he rested, but with the dawn he arose, and was arming himself for

shaken by the fall. Then they fought together right fiercely, hacking away great pieces of armor, and dealing each other dreadful wounds. But when they paused to take breath, Balin, looking up, saw the battlements of the castle filled with knights and ladies watching the struggle, and immediately, shamed that the conflict should have so long endured, he rushed again upon the Red Knight, aiming at him blows that might have felled a giant. So they fought together a long while; but at the last, the Red Knight drew back a little. Then cried Balin: "Who art thou? for till now, never have I met my match." Then said the Red Knight: "I am Balan, brother to the noble knight, Sir Balin"; and with the word, he fell to the ground as one dead. "Alas!" cried Balin, "that I should have lived to see this day!" Then, as well as he might, for his strength was almost spent, he crept on hands and knees to his brother's side and opened the vizor of his helmet, and when he saw his brother's face all ghastly, as it was, he cried: "O Balan, I have slain thee, as thou hast also slain me! Oh! woeful deed! never to be forgotten of men!" Then Balan, being somewhat recovered, told Balin how he had been compelled by those at the Castle to keep the ford against all comers, and might never depart; and Balin told of the grievous chance by which he had taken another's shield.

So these two died, slain by each other's hands. In one tomb they were buried; and Merlin, passing that way, inscribed thereon the full story of their deaths.

BOOK II

SIR LAUNCELOT

CHAPTER V

Sir Launcelot du Lac

NOW, as time passed, King Arthur gathered into his Order of the Round Table knights whose peers shall never be found in any age; and foremost among them all was Sir Launcelot du Lac. Such was his strength that none against whom he laid lance in rest could keep the saddle, and no shield was proof against

had laid waste the fair land of Benwick; then, when there was peace in his own land, he passed into Britain, to Arthur's Court, where the king received him gladly, and made him Knight of the Round Table and took him for his trustiest friend. And so it was that, when Guenevere was to be brought to Canterbury, to be married to the king, Launcelot was chief of the knights sent to wait upon her, and of this came the sorrow of later days. For, from the moment he saw her, Sir Launcelot loved Guenevere, for her sake remaining wifeless all his days, and in all things being her faithful knight. But busybodies and mischief-makers spoke evil of Sir Launcelot and the queen, and from their talk came the undoing of the king and the downfall of his great work. But that was after long years, and after many true knights had lived their lives, honoring the king and queen, and doing great deeds whereby the fame of Arthur and his Order passed through all the world.

Chapter VI

The Adventure of the Chapel Perilous

Now on a day, as he rode through the forest, Sir Launcelot met a damsel weeping bitterly, and seeing him, she cried, "Stay, Sir Knight! By your knighthood I require you to aid me in my distress." Immediately Sir Launcelot checked his horse and asked in what she needed his service. "Sir," said the maiden, "my brother lies at the point of death, for this day he fought with the

stout knight, Sir Gilbert, and sorely they wounded each other; and a wise woman, a sorceress, has said that nothing may stanch my brother's wounds unless they be searched with the sword and bound up with a piece of the cloth from the body of the wounded knight who lies in the ruined chapel hard by. And well I know you, my lord Sir Launcelot, and that, if ye will not help me, none may." "Tell me your brother's name," said Sir Launcelot. "Sir Meliot de Logris," replied the damsel. "A Knight of our Round Table," said Sir Launcelot; "the more am I bound to your service. Only tell me, gentle damsel, where I may find this Chapel Perilous." So she directed him, and, riding through forest byways, Sir Launcelot came presently upon a little ruined chapel, standing in the midst of a church-

fiercely, whereupon instantly they scattered and disappeared, and, sword in hand, Sir Launcelot entered the little chapel. All was dark within, save that a little lamp hung from the roof, and by its dim light he could just espy how on a bier before the altar there lay, stark and cold, a knight sheathed in armor. And drawing nearer, Sir Launcelot saw that the dead man lay on a blood-stained mantle, his naked sword by his side, but that his left hand had been lopped off at the wrist by a mighty sword-cut. Then Sir Launcelot boldly seized the sword and with it cut off a piece of the bloody mantle. Immediately the earth shook and the walls of the chapel rocked, and in fear Sir Launcelot turned to go. But, as he would have left the chapel, there stood before him in the doorway a lady, fair to look upon and beautifully arrayed, who gazed earnestly upon him, and said: "Sir Knight, put away from you that sword lest it be your death." But Sir Launcelot answered her: "Lady, what I have said, I do; and what I have won, I keep." "It is well," said the lady. "Had ye cast away the sword your life days were done. And now I make but one request. Kiss me once." "That may I not do," said Sir Launcelot. Then said the lady, "Go your way, Launcelot; ye have won, and I have lost. Know that, had ye kissed me, your dead body had lain even now on the altar bier. For much have I desired to win you; and to entrap you, I ordained this chapel. Many a knight have I taken, and once Sir Gawain himself hardly escaped, but he fought with Sir Gilbert and lopped off his hand, and

so got away. Fare ye well; it is plain to see that none but our lady, Queen Guenevere, may have your services." With that, she vanished from his sight. So Sir Launcelot mounted his horse and rode away from that evil place till he met Sir Meliot's sister, who led him to her brother where he lay, pale as the earth, and bleeding fast. And when he saw Sir Launcelot, he would have risen to greet him; but his strength failed him, and he fell back on his couch. Sir Launcelot searched his wounds with the sword, and bound them up with the blood-stained cloth, and immediately Sir Meliot was sound and well, and greatly he rejoiced. Then Sir Meliot and his sister begged Sir Launcelot to stay and rest, but he departed on his adventures, bidding them farewell until he should meet them again at Arthur's court.

Launcelot, Launcelot! As ye are the noblest of all knights, I pray you help me to recover my falcon. For if my husband discover its loss, he will slay me in his anger." "Who is your husband, fair lady?" asked Sir Launcelot. "Sir Phelot, a knight of Northgalis, and he is of a hasty temper; wherefore, I beseech you, help me." "Well, lady," said Sir Launcelot, "I will serve you if I may; but the tree is hard to climb, for the boughs are few, and, in truth, I am no climber. But I will do my best." So the lady helped Sir Launcelot to unarm, and he led his horse to the foot of the tree, and springing from its back, he caught at the nearest bough, and drew himself up into the branches. Then he climbed till he reached the falcon and, tying her lines to a rotten bough, broke it off, and threw down bird and bough to the lady below. Forthwith, Sir Phelot came from among the trees and said: "Ah! Sir Launcelot! Now at length I have you as I would; for I have long sought your life." And Sir Launcelot made answer: "Surely ye would not slay me, an unarmed man; for that were dishonor to you. Keep my armor if ye will; but hang my sword on a bough where I may reach it, and then do with me as ye can." But Sir Phelot laughed mockingly and said: "Not so, Sir Launcelot. I know you too well to throw away my advantage; wherefore, shift as ye may." "Alas!" said Sir Launcelot, "that ever knight should be so unknightly. And you, madam, how could ye so betray me?" "She did but as I commanded her," said Sir Phelot.

Then Launcelot looked about him to see how he

might help himself in these straits, and espying above his head a great bare branch, he tore it down. Then, ever watching his advantage, he sprang to the ground on the far side of his horse, so that the horse was between him and Sir Phelot. Sir Phelot rushed upon him with his sword, but Sir Launcelot parried it with the bough, with which he dealt his enemy such a blow on the head that Sir Phelot sank to the ground in a swoon. Then Sir Launcelot seized his sword where it lay beside his armor, and stooping over the fallen knight, unloosed his helm. When the lady saw him do that, she shrieked and cried: "Spare his life! spare his life, noble knight, I beseech you!" But Sir Launcelot answered sternly: "A felon's death for him who does felon's deeds. He has lived too long already," and with one blow he smote off his

BOOK III

SIR TRISTRAM

CHAPTER VIII

Of the Birth of Sir Tristram

IN the days of Arthur, there ruled over the kingdom of Liones the good knight Sir Meliodas; and his queen was the fair Elizabeth, sister of King Mark of Cornwall.

Now there was a lady, an enchantress, who had no goodwill toward King Meliodas and his queen; so one day, when the king was hunting, she brought it to pass by her charms that Meliodas chased a hart till he found himself, far from all his men, alone by an old castle, and there he was taken prisoner by the lady's knights.

When King Meliodas did not return home, the queen was nigh crazed with grief. Attended only by one of the ladies of her court, she ran out into the forest to seek her lord. Long and far she wandered, until she could go no further, but sank down at the foot of a great tree, and there, in the midst of the forest, was her little son born. When the queen knew that she must die, she kissed the babe and said: "Ah! little son, sad has been thy birth, wherefore thy name shall be Tristram; but thou shalt grow to be a brave knight and a strong." Then she charged her gentlewoman to take care of the

child and to commend her to King Meliodas; and after that she died. All too late came many of the barons seeking their queen, and sorrowfully they bore her back to the castle, where presently the king arrived, released by the skill of Merlin from the evil spells of the enchantress. Great indeed was his grief for the death of his queen. He caused her to be buried with all the pomp and reverence due to so good and fair a lady, and long and bitterly he mourned her loss and all the people with him.

But at the end of seven years, King Meliodas took another wife. Then, when the queen had sons of her own, it angered her to think that, in the days to come, her stepson Tristram, and none other, should rule the fair land of Liones. The more she thought of it, the more she hated him, till at the last she was resolved to do away with

stant. Seizing the queen by the hand, he cried: "False traitress! tell me at once what is in that cup, or I will slay thee!" Then she cried him mercy and told him all her sin. But in his wrath the king would have no mercy, but sentenced her to be burned at the stake, which in those days was the doom of traitors. The day having come when the queen should suffer for her fault, she was led out and bound to a stake in the presence of all the court, and the fagots were heaped about her. Then the young prince Tristram kneeled before the king and asked of him a favor: and the king, loving him much, granted him his request. "Then," said Tristram, "I require you to release the queen, my stepmother, and to take her again to your favor." Greatly the king marvelled, and said: "Ye should of right hate her, seeing that she sought your life." But Tristram answered: "I forgive her freely." "I give you then her life," said the king; "do ye release her from the stake." So Tristram unloosed the chains which bound the queen and led her back to the castle, and from that day the queen loved him well; but as for King Meliodas, though he forgave her and suffered her to remain at court, yet never again would he have aught to do with her.

Chapter IX

How Tristram Fought with Sir Marhaus of Ireland

Now Meliodas, though he had pardoned the queen, would keep his son Tristram no longer at the court, but

sent him into France. There Tristram learned all knightly exercises, so that there was none could equal him as harper or hunter; and after seven years, being by then a youth of nineteen, he returned to his own land of Liones.

It chanced, in those days, that King Anguish of Ireland sent to Cornwall, demanding the tribute paid him in former times by that land. Then Mark, the Cornish King, called together his barons and knights to take counsel; and by their advice, he made answer that he would pay no tribute, and bade King Anguish send a stout knight to fight for his right if he still dared claim aught of the land of Cornwall.

Forthwith there came from Ireland Sir Marhaus, brother of the Queen of Ireland. Now Sir Marhaus was Knight of the Round Table and in his time there were few of greater renown. He anchored his ships under the Castle of Tintagil, and sent messengers daily to King Mark, bidding him pay the tribute or find one to fight in his cause.

Then was King Mark sore perplexed, for not one of his knights dared encounter Sir Marhaus. Criers were sent through all the land, proclaiming that, to any knight that would take the combat upon him, King Mark would give such gifts as should enrich him for life. In time, word of all that had happened came to Liones, and immediately Tristram sought his father, desiring his permission to go to the court of his uncle, King Mark, to take the battle upon him. Thus it came to pass that, with his father's good leave, Tristram presented himself

before King Mark, asking to be made knight that he might do battle for the liberties of Cornwall. Then when Mark knew that it was his sister's son, he rejoiced greatly, and having made Tristram knight, he sent word to Sir Marhaus that there was found to meet him a champion of better birth than Sir Marhaus' self.

So it was arranged that the combat should take place on a little island hard by, where Sir Marhaus had anchored his ships. Sir Tristram, with his horse and arms, was placed on board a ship, and when the island was gained, he leaped on shore, bidding his squire put off again and only return when he was slain or victorious.

Now, when Sir Marhaus saw that Tristram was but a youth, he cried aloud to him: "Be advised, young Sir, and go back to your ship. What can ye hope to do against me, a proven knight of Arthur's Table?" Then Tristram made answer: "Sir and most famous champion, I have been made knight to do battle with you, and I promise myself to win honor thereby, I who have never before encountered a proven knight." "If ye can endure three strokes of my sword, it shall be honor enough," said Sir Marhaus. Then they rushed upon each other, and at the first encounter each unhorsed the other, and Sir Marhaus' spear pierced Sir Tristram's side and made a grievous wound. Drawing their swords, they lashed at each other, and the blows fell thick as hail till the island re-echoed with the din of onslaught. So they fought half a day, and ever it seemed that Sir Tristram grew fresher and nimbler while Sir Marhaus became sore

wearied. And at the last, Sir Tristram aimed a great blow at the head of his enemy, and the sword crashed through the helmet and bit into the skull so that a great piece was broken away from the edge of Tristram's sword. Then Sir Marhaus flung away sword and shield, and when he might regain his feet, fled shrieking to his ships. "Do ye flee?" cried Tristram. "I am but newly made knight; but, rather than flee, I would be hewn piecemeal."

Then came Gouvernail, Sir Tristram's squire, and bore his master back to land, where Mark and all the Cornish lords came to meet him and convey him to the Castle of Tintagil. Far and wide they sent for surgeons to dress Sir Tristram's wound, but none might help him, and ever he grew weaker. At the last, a wise woman

ship drew near with one who harped as none other might. Then King Anguish sent knights to convey the stranger into the castle. So when he was brought into the king's presence, Tristram declared that he was Sir Tristram of Liones, lately made knight, and wounded in his first battle; for which cause he was come to Ireland to seek healing. Forthwith the king made him welcome, and placed him in the charge of his daughter, Isolt. Now Isolt was famed for her skill in surgery, and, moreover, she was the fairest lady of that time, save only Queen Guenevere. So she searched and bandaged Sir Tristram's wound, and presently it was healed. But still Sir Tristram abode at King Anguish's court, teaching the fair Isolt to harp, and taking great pleasure in her company. And ever the princess doubted whether Sir Tristram were not a renowned knight, and ever she liked him better.

So the time passed merrily with feastings and in the jousts, and in the lists Sir Tristram won great honor when he was recovered of his wound.

At last it befell upon a day that Sir Tristram had gone to the bath and left his sword lying on the couch. And the queen, entering, espied it, and taking it up, drew the sword from the sheath and fell to admiring the mighty blade. Presently she saw that the edge was notched, and while she pondered how great a blow must have broken the good steel, suddenly she bethought her of the piece which had been found in the head of her brother, Sir Marhaus. Hastening to her chamber, she sought in a casket for the

fragment, and returning, placed it by the sword-edge, where it fitted as well as on the day it was first broken. Then she cried to her daughter: "This, then, is the traitor knight who slew my brother, Sir Marhaus;" and snatching up the sword, she rushed upon Sir Tristram where he sat in his bath, and would have killed him, but that his squire restrained her. Having failed of her purpose, she sought her husband, King Anguish, and told him all her story: how the knight they had harbored was he who had slain Sir Marhaus. Then the king, sore perplexed, went to Sir Tristram's chamber, where he found him fully armed, ready to get to horse. And Tristram told him all the truth, how in fair fight he had slain Sir Marhaus. "Ye did as a knight should," said King Anguish; "and much it grieves me that I may not keep you at my court; but I cannot so displease my queen or barons." "Sir," said Tristram, "I thank you for your courtesy, and will requite it as occasion may offer. Moreover, here I pledge my word, as I am good knight and true, to be your daughter's servant, and in all places and at all times to uphold her quarrel. Wherefore I pray you that I may take my leave of the princess."

Then, with the king's permission, Sir Tristram went to the fair Isolt and told her all his story. "And here," said he, "I make my vow ever to be your true knight, and at all times and in all places to uphold your quarrel." "And on my part," answered the fair Isolt, "I make promise that never these seven years will I marry any man, save with your leave and as ye shall

desire." There with they exchanged rings, the fair Isolt grieving sore the while. Then Sir Tristram strode into the court and cried aloud, before all the barons: "Ye Knights of Ireland, the time is come when I must depart. Therefore, if any man have aught against me, let him stand forth now, and I will satisfy him as I may." Now there were many present of the kin of Sir Marhaus, but none dared have ado with Sir Tristram; so, slowly he rode away, and with his squire took ship again for Cornwall.

Chapter XI

How King Mark Sent Sir Tristram to Fetch Him a Wife

When Sir Tristram had come back to Cornwall, he abode some time at the court of King Mark. Now in those days the Cornish knights were little esteemed, and none less than Mark himself, who was a coward, and never adventured himself in fair and open combat, seeking rather to attack by stealth and have his enemy at an advantage. But the fame of Sir Tristram increased daily, and all men spoke well of him. So it came to pass that King Mark, knowing himself despised, grew fearful and jealous of the love that all men bore his nephew; for he seemed in their praise of him to hear his own reproach. He sought, therefore, how he might rid himself of Tristram even while he spoke him fair and made as if he loved him much, and at the last he bethought him how he might gain his end and no man be the wiser. So one

day he said to Tristram: "Fair nephew, I am resolved to marry, and fain would I have your aid." "In all things, I am yours to command," answered Sir Tristram. "I pray you, then," said King Mark, "bring me to wife the fair Isolt of Ireland. For since I have heard your praises of her beauty, I may not rest unless I have her for my queen." And this he said thinking that, if ever Sir Tristram set foot in Ireland, he would be slain.

But Tristram, nothing mistrusting, got together a company of gallant knights, all fairly arrayed as became men sent by their king on such an errand; and with them he embarked on a goodly ship. Now it chanced that when he had reached the open sea, a great storm arose and drove him back on to the coast of England, and landing with great difficulty he set up his pavilion hard by the city of Camelot.

Presently, word was brought him by his squire that King Anguish with his company lay hard by, and that the king was in sore straits; for he was charged with the murder of a knight of Arthur's court, and must meet in combat Sir Blamor, one of the stoutest knights of the Round Table. Then Sir Tristram rejoiced, for he saw in this opportunity of serving King Anguish the means of earning his goodwill. So he betook himself to the king's tent, and proffered to take upon him the encounter, for the kindness shown him by King Anguish in former days. And the king gratefully accepting of his championship, the next day Sir Tristram encountered with Sir Blamor, overthrew him, and so acquitted the

Irish king of the charge brought against him. Then in his joy, King Anguish begged Sir Tristram to voyage with him to his own land, bidding Tristram ask what boon he would and he should have it. So rejoicing in his great fortune, Sir Tristram sailed once again for the Irish land.

Chapter XII

How Sir Tristram and the Fair Isolt Drank of the Magic Potion

Then King Anguish made haste to return to Ireland, taking Sir Tristram with him. And when he was come there and had told all his adventures, there was great rejoicing over Sir Tristram, but of none more than of the fair Isolt. So when Tristram had stayed there some while, King Anguish reminded him of the boon he should ask and of his own willingness to grant it. "Sir King," replied Sir Tristram, "now will I ask it. Grant me your daughter, the fair Isolt, that I may take her to Cornwall, there to become the wife of my uncle, King Mark." Then King Anguish grieved when he heard Sir Tristram's request, and said, "Far more gladly would I give her to you to wife." "That may not be," replied Sir Tristram; "my honor forbids." "Take her, then," said King Anguish, "she is yours to wed or to give to your uncle, King Mark, as seems good to you."

So a ship was made ready and there entered it the fair Isolt and Sir Tristram, and Gouvernail, his squire, and Dame Bragwaine, who was maid to the princess.

But before they sailed the queen gave in charge to Gouvernail and Dame Bragwaine a phial of wine which King Mark and Isolt should drink together on their wedding-day. "For," said the queen, "such is the magic virtue of this wine, that, having drunk of it, they may never cease from loving one another."

Now it chanced, one day, that Sir Tristram sat and harped to the fair Isolt; and the weather being hot, he became thirsty. Then looking round the cabin he beheld a golden flask, curiously shaped and wrought; and laughing, he said to the fair Isolt: "See, madam, how my man and your maid care for themselves; for here is the best wine that ever I tasted. I pray you, now, drink to me." So with mirth and laughter, they pledged each other, and thought that never before had they tasted aught so good. But when they had made an end of drinking, there came upon them the might of the magic charm; and never from that day, for good or for ill, might they cease from their love. And so much woe was wrought; for, mindful of his pledge to his uncle, Sir Tristram brought Isolt in all honor into the land of Cornwall, where she was wedded with pomp and ceremony to King Mark, the craven king, who hated his nephew even more than before, because he had returned in safety and made good his promise as became an honorable knight. And from that day he never ceased seeking the death of Sir Tristram.

Chapter XIII

Of the End of Sir Tristram

Then again Sir Tristram abode at King Mark's court, ever rendering the fair Isolt loyal and knightly service; for King Mark would imperil his life for none, no matter what the need.

Now among the Cornish knights, there was much jealousy of Sir Tristram de Liones, and chief of his enemies was his own cousin, Sir Andred. With lying words, Sir Andred sought to stir up King Mark against his nephew, speaking evil of the queen and of Sir Tristram. Now Mark was afraid openly to accuse Sir Tristram, so he set Sir Andred to spy upon him. At last, it befell one day that Sir Andred saw Sir Tristram coming, alone and unarmed, from the queen's presence, and with twelve other knights, he fell upon him and bound him. Then these felon knights bore Sir Tristram to a little chapel standing upon a great rock which jutted out into the sea. There they would have slain him, unarmed and bound. But Sir Tristram, perceiving their intent, put forth suddenly all his strength, burst his bonds, and wresting a sword from Sir Andred, cut him down; and so he did with six other knights. Then while the rest, being but cowards, gave back a little, he shut to and bolted the doors against them, and sprang from the window on to the sea-washed rocks below. There he lay as one dead, until his squire, Gouvernail, coming in a little boat, took up his master, dressed his wounds, and carried him

to the coast of England. So Sir Tristram was minded to remain in that country for a time.

Then, one day, as he rode through the forest near Camelot, there came running to him a fair lady who cried: "Sir Tristram, I claim your aid for the truest knight in all the world, and that is none other than King Arthur." "With a good heart," said Sir Tristram; "but where may I find him?" "Follow me," said the lady, who was none other than the Lady of the Lake herself, and ever mindful of the welfare of King Arthur. So he rode after her till he came to a castle, and in front of it he saw two knights who beset at once another knight, and when Sir Tristram came to the spot, the two had borne King Arthur to the ground and were about to cut off his head. Then Sir Tristram called to them to leave their traitor's work and look to themselves; with the word, one he pierced through with his spear and the other he cut down, and setting King Arthur again upon his horse, he rode with him until they met with certain of Arthur's knights. But when King Arthur would know his name, Tristram would give none, but said only that he was a poor errant knight; and so they parted.

But Arthur, when he was come back to Camelot, sent for Sir Launcelot and other of his knights, bidding them seek for such an one as was Sir Tristram and bring him to the court. So they departed, each his own way, and searched for many days, but in vain. Then it chanced, at last, as Sir Launcelot rode on his way, he espied Sir

Tristram resting beside a tomb ; and, as was the custom of knights-errant, he called upon him to joust. So the two ran together and each broke his spear. Then they sprang to the ground and fought with their swords, and each thought that never had he encountered so stout or so skilled a knight. So fiercely they fought that, perforce, at last they must rest. Then said Sir Launcelot, "Fair Knight, I pray you tell me your name, for never have I met so good a knight." "In truth," said Sir Tristram, "I am loth to tell my name." "I marvel at that," said Sir Launcelot; "for mine I will tell you freely. I am Launcelot du Lac." Then was Sir Tristram filled at once with joy and with sorrow; with joy that at last he had encountered the noblest knight of the Round Table, with sorrow that he had done him such hurt, and without more ado he revealed his name. Now Sir Launcelot, who ever delighted in the fame of another, had long desired to meet Sir Tristram de Liones, and rejoicing to have found him, he knelt right courteously and proffered him his sword, as if he would yield to him. But Tristram would not have it so, declaring that, rather, he should yield to Sir Launcelot. So they embraced right heartily, and when Sir Launcelot questioned him, Sir Tristram acknowledged that it was he who had come to King Arthur's aid. Together, then, they rode to Camelot, and there Sir Tristram was received with great honor by King Arthur, who made him Knight of the Round Table.

Presently, to Tristram at Camelot, there came word

that King Mark had driven the fair Isolt from court, and compelled her to have her dwelling in a hut set apart for lepers. Then Sir Tristram was wroth indeed, and mounting his horse, rode forth that same hour, and rested not till he had found the lepers' hut, whence he bore the queen to the castle known as the Joyous Garde; and there he held her, in safety and honor, in spite of all that King Mark could do. And all men honored Sir Tristram, and felt sorrow for the fair Isolt; while as for King Mark, they scorned him even more than before.

But to Sir Tristram, it was grief to be at enmity with his uncle who had made him knight, and at last he craved King Arthur's aid to reconcile him to Mark. So then the king, who loved Sir Tristram, sent messengers to Cornwall to Mark, bidding him come forthwith to Camelot; and when the Cornish King was arrived, Arthur required him to set aside his enmity to Tristram, who had in all things been his loyal nephew and knight. And King Mark, his heart full of hate, but fearful of offending his lord, King Arthur, made fair proffers of friendship, begging Sir Tristram to return to Cornwall with him, and promising to hold him in love and honor. So they were reconciled, and when King Mark returned to Cornwall, thither Sir Tristram escorted the fair Isolt, and himself abode there, believing his uncle to mean truly and honorably by him.

But under a seeming fair exterior, King Mark hated Sir Tristram more than ever, and waited only to have

him at an advantage. At length he contrived the opportunity he sought. For he hid him in the queen's chamber at a time when he knew Sir Tristram would come there unarmed, to harp to the fair Isolt the music that she loved. So as Sir Tristram, all unsuspecting, bent over his harp, Mark leaped from his lurking place and dealt him such a blow from behind that, on the instant, he fell dead at the feet of the fair Isolt. So perished the good knight, Sir Tristram de Liones. Nor did the fair Isolt long survive him, for refusing all comfort, she pined away, and died within a few days, and was laid in a tomb beside that of her true knight. But the felon king paid the price of his treachery with his life; for Sir Launcelot himself avenged the death of his friend and the wrongs of the fair Isolt.

BOOK IV

KING ARTHUR'S NEPHEWS

CHAPTER XIV

Sir Gawain and the Lady

AMONG the knights at King Arthur's court were his nephews, the sons of his sister, Queen Bellicent, and of that King Lot of Orkney, who had joined the league against Arthur in the first years of his reign.

Of each, many tales are told; of Sir Gawain and Sir Gareth to their great renown, but of Sir Mordred to his shame. For Sir Gawain and Sir Gareth were knights of great prowess; but Sir Mordred was a coward and a traitor, envious of other men's fame, and a tale-bearer.

Now Sir Gawain was known as the Ladies' Knight, and this is how he came by the name. It was at Arthur's marriage-feast, when Gawain had just been made knight, that a strange thing befell. There entered the hall a white hart, chased by a hound, and when it had run round the hall, it fled through the doorway again, still followed by the hound. Then, by Merlin's advice, the quest of the hart was given to Gawain as a new-made knight, to follow it and see what adventures it would bring him. So Sir Gawain rode away, taking with him three couples of greyhounds for the pursuit. At the last, the hounds caught the hart, and killed it just as it reached

the courtyard of a castle. Then there came forth from the castle a knight, and he was grieved and wroth to see the hart slain, for it was given him by his lady; so, in his anger, he killed two of the hounds. At that moment Sir Gawain entered the courtyard, and an angry man was he when he saw his greyhounds slain. "Sir Knight," said he, "ye would have done better to have taken your vengeance on me rather than on dumb animals which but acted after their kind." "I will be avenged on you also," cried the knight; and the two rushed together, cutting and thrusting that it was wonderful they might so long endure. But at the last the knight grew faint, and crying for mercy, offered to yield to Sir Gawain. "Ye had no mercy on my hounds," said Sir Gawain. "I will make you all the amends in my power," answered the knight. But Sir Gawain would not be turned from his purpose, and unlacing the vanquished knight's helmet, was about to cut off his head, when a lady rushed out from the castle and flung herself on the body of the fallen knight. So it chanced that Sir Gawain's sword descending smote off the lady's head. Then was Sir Gawain grieved and sore ashamed for what he had done, and said to the knight: "I repent for what I have done; and here I give you your life. Go only to Camelot, to King Arthur's court, and tell him ye are sent by the knight who follows the quest of the white hart." "Ye have slain my lady," said the other, "and now I care not what befalls me." So he arose and went to King Arthur's court.

Then Sir Gawain prepared to rest him there for the night; but scarcely had he lain down when there fell upon him four knights, crying, "New-made knight, ye have shamed your knighthood, for a knight without mercy is without honor." Then was Sir Gawain borne to the earth, and would have been slain, but that there came forth from the castle four ladies who besought the knights to spare his life; so they consented and bound him prisoner.

The next morning Sir Gawain was brought again before the knights and their dames; and because he was King Arthur's nephew, the ladies desired that he should be set free, only they required that he should ride again to Camelot, the murdered lady's head hanging from his neck, and her dead body across his saddle-bow; and that when he arrived at the court he should confess his misdeeds.

So Sir Gawain rode sadly back to Camelot, and when he had told his tale, King Arthur was sore displeased. And Queen Guenevere held a court of her ladies to pass sentence on Sir Gawain for his ungentleness. These then decreed that, his life long, he must never refuse to fight for any lady who desired his services, and that ever he should be gentle and courteous and show mercy to all. From that time forth, Sir Gawain never failed in aught that dame or damsel asked of him, and so he won and kept the title of the Ladies' Knight.

The Story of King Arthur

Chapter XV

The Adventures of Sir Gareth

Gareth was the youngest of the sons of Lot and Bellicent, and had grown up long after Gawain and Mordred left their home for King Arthur's court; so that when he came before the king, all humbly attired, he was known not even by his own brothers.

King Arthur was keeping Pentecost at Kink Kenadon on the Welsh border, and, as his custom was, waited to begin the feast until some adventure should befall. Presently there was seen approaching a youth who, to the wonderment of all that saw, leaned upon the shoulders of two men, his companions; and yet as he passed up the hall, he seemed a goodly youth, tall and broad-shouldered. When he stood before the king, suddenly he drew himself up and after due greeting, said: "Sir King, I would ask of you three boons; one to be granted now and two hereafter when I shall require them." And Arthur, looking upon him, was pleased, for his countenance was open and honest. So he made answer: "Fair son, ask of me aught that is honorable and I will grant it." Then the youth said: "For this present, I ask only that ye will give me meat and drink for a year and a day." "Ye might have asked and had a better gift," replied the king; "tell me now your name." "At this time, I may not tell it," said the youth. Now King Arthur trusted every man until he proved himself unworthy, and in this youth he thought he saw one who

should do nobly and win renown; so laughing, he bade him keep his own counsel since so he would, and gave him in charge to Sir Kay, the Seneschal.

Now Sir Kay was but harsh to those whom he liked not, and from the first he scorned the young man. "For none," said he, "but a low-born lout would crave meat and drink when he might have asked for a horse and arms." But Sir Launcelot and Sir Gawain took the youth's part. Neither knew him for Gareth of the Orkneys, but both believed him to be a youth of good promise who, for his own reasons, would pass in disguise for a season.

So Gareth lived the year among the kitchen boys, all the time mocked and scorned by Sir Kay, who called him Fairhands because his hands were white and shapely. But Launcelot and Gawain showed him all courtesy, and failed not to observe how, in all trials of strength, he excelled his comrades, and that he was ever present to witness the feats of the knights in the tournaments.

So the year passed, and again King Arthur was keeping the feast of Pentecost with his knights, when a damsel entered the hall and asked his aid: "For," said she, "my sister is closely besieged in her castle by a strong knight who lays waste all her lands. And since I know that the knights of your court be the most renowned in the world, I have come to crave help of your mightiest." "What is your sister's name, and who is he that oppresses her?" asked the king. "The Red Knight, he is called," replied the damsel. "As for my

sister, I will not say her name, only that she is a high-born lady and owns broad lands." Then the king frowned and said: "Ye would have aid but will say no name. I may not ask knight of mine to go on such an errand."

Then forth stepped Gareth from among the serving-men at the hall end and said: "Sir King, I have eaten of your meat in your kitchen this twelvemonth since, and now I crave my other two boons." "Ask and have," replied the king. "Grant me then the adventure of this damsel, and bid Sir Launcelot ride after me to knight me at my desire, for of him alone would I be made knight." "It shall be so," answered the king. "What!" cried the damsel, "I ask for a knight and ye give me a kitchen-boy. Shame on you, Sir King." And in great wrath she fled from the hall, mounted her palfrey and rode away. Gareth but waited to array himself in the armor which he had kept ever in readiness for the time when he should need it, and, mounting his horse, rode after the damsel.

But when Sir Kay knew what had happened, he was wroth, and got to horse to ride after Gareth and bring him back. Even as Gareth overtook the damsel, so did Kay come up with him and cried: "Turn back, Fair-hands! What, sir, do ye not know me?" "Yes," answered Gareth, "I know you for the most discourteous knight in Arthur's court." Then Sir Kay rode upon him with his lance, but Gareth turned it aside with his sword and pierced Sir Kay through the side so that he fell to

the ground and lay there without motion. So Gareth took Sir Kay's shield and spear and was about to ride away, when seeing Sir Launcelot draw near he called upon him to joust. At the first encounter, Sir Launcelot unhorsed Gareth, but quickly helped him to his feet. Then, at Gareth's desire, they fought together with swords, and Gareth did knightly till, at length, Sir Launcelot said, laughing: "Why should we fight any longer? Of a truth ye are a stout knight." "If that is indeed your thought, I pray you make me knight," cried Gareth. So Sir Launcelot knighted Gareth, who, bidding him farewell, hastened after the damsel, for she had ridden on again while the two knights talked. When she saw him coming, she cried: "Keep off! ye smell of the kitchen!" "Damsel," said Sir Gareth, "I must follow until I have fulfilled the adventure." "Till ye accomplish the adventure, Turn-spit? Your part in it shall soon be ended." "I can only do my best," answered Sir Gareth.

Now as they rode through the forest, they met with a knight sore beset by six thieves, and him Sir Gareth rescued. The knight then bade Gareth and the damsel rest at his castle, and entertained them right gladly until the morn, when the two rode forth again. Presently, they drew near to a deep river where two knights kept the ford. "How now, kitchen knave? Will ye fight or escape while ye may?" cried the damsel. "I would fight though there were six instead of two," replied Sir Gareth. Therewith he encountered the one knight in midstream and struck him such a blow on the head that

he fell, stunned, into the water and was drowned. Then, gaining the land, Gareth cleft in two helmet and head of the other knight, and turned to the damsel, saying "Lead on; I follow."

But the damsel mocked him, saying: "What a mischance is this that a kitchen boy should slay two noble knights! Be not overproud, Turn-spit. It was but luck, if indeed ye did not attack one knight from behind." "Say what you will, I follow," said Sir Gareth.

So they rode on again, the damsel in front and Sir Gareth behind, till they reached a wide meadow where stood many fair pavilions; and one, the largest, was all of blue, and the men who stood about it were clothed in blue, and bore shields and spears of that color; and of blue, too, were the trappings of the horses. Then said the damsel, "Yonder is the Blue Knight, the goodliest that ever ye have looked upon, and five hundred knights own him lord." "I will encounter him," said Sir Gareth; "for if he be good knight and true as ye say, he will scarce set on me with all his following; and man to man, I fear him not." "Fie!" said the damsel, "for a dirty knave, ye brag loud. And even if ye overcome him, his might is as nothing to that of the Red Knight who besieges my lady sister. So get ye gone while ye may." "Damsel," said Sir Gareth, "ye are but ungentle so to rebuke me; for, knight or knave, I have done you good service, nor will I leave this quest while life is mine." Then the damsel was ashamed, and, looking curiously at Gareth, she said, "I would gladly know what manner of

man ye are. For I heard you call yourself kitchen knave before Arthur's self, but ye have ever answered patiently though I have chidden you shamefully; and courtesy comes only of gentle blood." Thereat Sir Gareth but laughed, and said: "He is no knight whom a maiden can anger by harsh words."

So talking, they entered the field, and there came to Sir Gareth a messenger from the Blue Knight to ask him if he came in peace or in war. "As your lord pleases," said Sir Gareth. So when the messenger had brought back this word, the Blue Knight mounted his horse, took his spear in his hand, and rode upon Sir Gareth. At their first encounter their lances shivered to pieces, and such was the shock that their horses fell dead. So they rushed on each other with sword and shield, cutting and slash-

rescue, might fall beneath his lance. If ye overthrow him, then are ye the peer of Sir Launcelot and Sir Tristram." "Sir Knight," answered Gareth, "I can but strive to bear me worthily as one whom the great Sir Launcelot made knight."

So in the morning they bade farewell to the Blue Knight, who vowed to carry to King Arthur word of all that Gareth had achieved; and they rode on till, in the evening, they came to a little ruined hermitage where there awaited them a dwarf, sent by the Lady Liones, with all manner of meats and other store. In the morning, the dwarf set out again to bear word to his lady that her rescuer was come. As he drew near the castle, the Red Knight stopped him, demanding whence he came. "Sir," said the dwarf, "I have been with my lady's sister, who brings with her a knight to the rescue of my lady." "It is lost labor," said the Red Knight; "even though she brought Launcelot or Tristram, I hold myself a match for them." "He is none of these," said the dwarf, "but he has overthrown the knights who kept the ford, and the Blue Knight yielded to him." "Let him come," said the Red Knight; "I shall soon make an end of him, and a shameful death shall he have at my hands, as many a better knight has had." So saying, he let the dwarf go.

Presently, there came riding toward the castle Sir Gareth and the damsel Linet, and Gareth marvelled to see hang from the trees some forty knights in goodly armor, their shields reversed beside them. And when

he inquired of the damsel, she told him how these were the bodies of brave knights who, coming to the rescue of the Lady Liones, had been overthrown and shamefully done to death by the Red Knight. Then was Gareth shamed and angry, and he vowed to make an end of these evil practices. So at last they drew near to the castle walls, and saw how the plain around was covered with the Red Knight's tents, and the noise was that of a great army. Hard by was a tall sycamore tree, and from it hung a mighty horn, made of an elephant's tusk. Spurring his horse, Gareth rode to it, and blew such a blast that those on the castle walls heard it; the knights came forth from their tents to see who blew so bold a blast, and from a window of the castle the Lady Liones looked forth and waved her hand to her champion.

other with their swords, cutting and hacking till the armor lay on the ground in fragments. So they fought till noon and then rested; but soon they renewed the battle, and so furiously they fought, that often they fell to the ground together. Then, when the bells sounded for evensong, the knights rested again, unlacing their helms to breathe the evening air. But looking up to the castle windows, Gareth saw the Lady Liones gazing earnestly upon him; then he caught up his helmet, and calling to the Red Knight, bade him make ready for the battle; "And this time," said he, "we will make an end of it." "So be it," said the Red Knight. Then the Red Knight smote Gareth on the hand that his sword flew from his grasp, and with another blow he brought him grovelling to the earth. At the sight of this, Linet cried aloud, and hearing her, Gareth, with a mighty effort, threw off the Red Knight, leaped to his sword, and got it again within his hand. Then he pressed the Red Knight harder than ever, and at the last bore him to the earth, and unlacing his helm, made ready to slay him; but the Red Knight cried aloud: "Mercy! I yield." At first, remembering the evil deaths of the forty good knights, Gareth was unwilling to spare him; but the Red Knight besought him to have mercy, telling him how, against his will, he had been bound by a vow to make war on Arthur's knights. So Sir Gareth relented, and bade him set forth at once for Kink Kenadon and entreat the king's pardon for his evil past. And this the Red Knight promised to do.

Then amid much rejoicing, Sir Gareth was borne into the castle. There his wounds were dressed by the Lady Liones, and there he rested until he recovered his strength. And having won her love, when Gareth returned to Arthur's court the Lady Liones rode with him, and they two were wed with great pomp in the presence of the whole Fellowship of the Round Table; the king rejoicing much that his nephew had done so valiantly. So Sir Gareth lived happily with Dame Liones, winning fame and the love of all true knights. As for Linet, she came again to Arthur's court and wedded Sir Gareth's younger brother, Sir Gaheris.

BOOK V

SIR GERAINT

CHAPTER XVI

The Adventures of Geraint

IT befell, one Whitsunday, that Arthur was holding his court at Caerleon, when word was brought to him of a splendid white stag that ranged the Forest of Dean, and forthwith the king proclaimed a hunt for the morrow.

So, with the dawn, there was much trampling of hoofs and baying of hounds as all the knights got to horse; but Queen Guenevere herself, though she had said she would ride with the hunt, slept late, and when she called her maidens to her, it was broad day. Then, with much haste, she arrayed herself, and taking one of her ladies with her, rode to a little rising ground in the forest, near which, as she well knew, the hunt must pass.

Presently, as she waited, there came riding by the gallant knight, Geraint of Devon. He was arrayed neither for the chase nor for the fight, but wore a surcoat of white satin and about him a loose scarf of purple, with a golden apple at each corner. And when the queen had answered his salutation, she said, "How is it, Prince, that ye be not ridden with the hunters?"

"Madam," answered he, "with shame I say it; I slept too late." Smiling, the queen said: "Then are we both in the same case, for I also arose too late. But tarry with me, and soon ye will hear the baying of the hounds; for often I have known them break covert here."

Then as they waited on the little woodland knoll, there came riding past a knight full armed, a lady with him, and behind them a dwarf, misshapen and evil-looking, and they passed without word or salutation to the queen.

Then said Guenevere to Geraint: "Prince, know ye yonder knight?" "Nay, madam," said he; "his arms I know not, and his face I might not see." Thereupon the queen turned to her attendant and said: "Ride after them quickly and ask the dwarf his master's name." So the maiden did as she was bidden; but when she inquired of the dwarf, he answered her roughly: "I will not tell thee my master's name." "Since thou art so churlish," said she, "I will even ask him himself." "That thou shalt not," he cried, and struck her across the face with his whip. So the maiden, alarmed and angered, rode back to the queen and told her all that had happened. "Madam," cried Geraint, "the churl has wronged your maiden and insulted your person. I pray you, suffer me to do your errand myself." With the word, he put spurs to his horse and rode after the three. And when he had come up with the dwarf, he asked the knight's name as the maiden had done, and the dwarf answered him as he had answered the queen's

lady. "I will speak with thy master himself," said Geraint. "Thou shalt not, by my faith!" said the dwarf. "Thou art not honorable enough to speak with my lord." "I have spoken with men of as good rank as he," answered Geraint, and would have turned his horse's head that he might ride after the knight; but the dwarf struck him across the face such a blow that the blood spurted forth over his purple scarf. Then, in his wrath, Geraint clapped hand to sword, and would have slain the churl, but that he bethought him how powerless was such a misshapen thing. So refraining himself, he rode back to the queen and said: "Madam, for the time the knight has escaped me. But, with your leave, I will ride after him, and require of him satisfaction for the wrong done to yourself and to your maiden. It must be that I shall come presently to a town where I may obtain armor. Farewell; if I live, ye shall have tidings of me by next even." "Farewell," said the queen; "I shall ever hold your good service in remembrance."

So Geraint rode forth on his quest, and followed the road to the ford of the Usk, where he crossed, and then went on his way until he came to a town, at the further end of which rose a mighty castle. And as he entered the town, he saw the knight and the lady, and how, as they rode through the streets, from every window the folk craned their necks to see them pass, until they had entered the castle and the gate fell behind them. Then was Geraint satisfied that they would not pass thence that night, and turned him about to see where

he could obtain the use of arms that, the next day, he might call the knight to account.

Now it seemed that the whole town was in a ferment. In every house, men were busy polishing shields, sharpening swords, and washing armor, and scarce could they find time to answer questions put to them; so at the last, finding nowhere in the town to rest, Geraint rode in the direction of a ruined palace, which stood a little apart from the town, and was reached by a marble bridge spanning a deep ravine. Seated on the bridge was an old man, hoary-headed, and clothed in the tattered remains of what had once been splendid attire, who gave Geraint courteous greeting. "Sir," said Geraint, "I pray you, know ye where I may find shelter for this night?" "Come with me," said the old man, "and ye shall have the best my old halls afford." So saying, he led Geraint into a great stone-paved courtyard, surrounded by buildings, once strong fortifications, but then half burned and ruinous. There he bade Geraint dismount, and led the way into an upper chamber, where sat an aged dame, and with her a maiden the fairest that ever Geraint had looked upon, for all that her attire was but a faded robe and veil. Then the old man spoke to the maiden, saying: "Enid, take the good knight's charger to a stall and give him corn. Then go to the town and buy us provision for a feast to-night." Now it pleased not Geraint that the maiden should thus do him service; but when he made to accompany her, the old man, her father, stayed him and kept him in converse until presently she was re-

turned from the town and had made all ready for the evening meal. Then they sat them down to supper, the old man and his wife, with Geraint between them; and the fair maid, Enid, waited upon them, though it irked the prince to see her do such menial service.

So as they ate, they talked, and presently Geraint asked of the cause why the palace was all in ruins. "Sir Knight," said the old man, "I am Yniol, and once I was lord of a broad earldom. But my nephew, whose guardian I had been, made war upon me, affirming that I had withheld from him his dues; and being the stronger, he prevailed, and seized my lands and burned my halls, even as ye see. For the townsfolk hold with him, because that, with his tournaments and feastings, he brings many strangers their way." "What then is all the stir in the town even now?" asked Geraint. "To-morrow," said the earl, "they hold the tournament of the Sparrow-Hawk. In the midst of the meadow are set up two forks, and on the forks a silver rod, and on the rod the form of a Sparrow-Hawk. Two years has it been won by the stout knight Edeyrn, and if he win it the morrow, it shall be his for aye, and he himself known as the Sparrow-Hawk." "Tell me," cried Geraint, "is that the knight that rode this day with a lady and a dwarf to the castle hard by?" "The same," said Yniol; "and a bold knight he is." Then Geraint told them of the insult offered that morning to Queen Guenevere and her maiden, and how he had ridden forth to obtain satisfaction. "And now, I pray you," said Geraint, "help

me to come by some arms, and in to-morrow's lists will I call this Sparrow-Hawk to account." "Arms have I," answered the earl, "old and rusty indeed, yet at your service. But, Sir Knight, ye may not appear in to-morrow's tournament, for none may contend unless he bring with him a lady in whose honor he jousts." Then cried Geraint: "Lord Earl, suffer me to lay lance in rest in honor of the fair maiden, your daughter. And if I fall to-morrow, no harm shall have been done her, and if I win, I will love her my life long, and make her my true wife." Now Enid, her service ended, had left them to their talk; but the earl, rejoicing that so noble a knight should seek his daughter's love, promised that, with the maiden's consent, all should be as the prince desired.

carried him from his horse, saddle and all. Then he dismounted, and the two rushed upon each other with their swords. Long they fought, the sparks flying and their breath coming hard, till, exerting all his strength, Geraint dealt the other such a blow as cleft his helmet and bit to the bone. Then Edeyrn flung away his sword and yielded him. "Thou shalt have thy life," said Geraint, "upon condition that, forthwith, thou goest to Arthur's court, there to deliver thyself to our queen, and make such atonement as shall be adjudged thee, for the insult offered her yester morn." "I will do so," answered Edeyrn; and when his wounds had been dressed he got heavily to horse and rode forth to Caerleon.

Then the young earl, Yniol's nephew, adjudged the Sparrow-Hawk to Geraint, as victor in the tourney, and prayed him to come to his castle to rest and feast. But Geraint, declining courteously, said that it behooved him to go there where he had rested the night before. "Where may that have been?" asked the earl; "for though ye come not to my castle, yet would I see that ye fare as befits your valor." "I rested even with Yniol, your uncle," answered Geraint. The young earl mused awhile, and then he said: "I will seek you, then, in my uncle's halls, and bring with me the means to furnish forth a feast."

And so it was. Scarcely had Prince Geraint returned to the ruined hall and bathed and rested him after his labors, when the young earl arrived, and with him forty of his followers bearing all manner of stores and plenish-

ings. And that same hour, the young earl was accorded with Ynoil, his uncle, restoring to him the lands of which he had deprived him, and pledging his word to build up again the ruined palace.

When they had gone to the banquet, then came to them Enid, attired in beautiful raiment befitting her rank; and the old earl led her to Geraint, saying: "Prince, here is the maiden for whom ye fought, and freely I bestow her upon you." So Geraint took her hand before them all and said: "She shall ride with me to Caerleon, and there will I wed her before Arthur's court." Then to Enid he said: "Gentle maiden, bear with me when I pray you to don the faded robe and veil in which first I saw you." And Enid, who was ever gentle and meek, did as he desired, and that evening they rode to Caerleon.

So when they drew near the king's palace, word was brought to Guenevere of their approach. Then the queen went forth to greet the good knight, and when she had heard all his story, she kissed the maiden, and leading her into her own chamber, arrayed her right royally for her marriage with the prince. And that evening they were wed amid great rejoicing, in the presence of all the knights and ladies of the court, the king himself giving Enid to her husband. Many happy days they spent at Caerleon, rejoicing in the love and goodwill of Arthur and his queen.

Chapter XVII

Geraint and Enid

Geraint and the fair Enid abodè more than a year at Arthur's court; Enid winning daily more and more the love of all by her gentleness and goodness, and Geraint being ever among the foremost in the tournament. But presently there came word of robber raids upon the borders of Devon; wherefore the prince craved leave of Arthur to return to his own land, there to put down wrong and oppression, and maintain order and justice. And the king bade him go and secure to every man his due.

So Geraint passed to his own land, Enid going with him; and soon he had driven the oppressors from their strongholds and established peace and order, so that the poor man dwelt in his little cot secure in his possessions. But when all was done, and there was none dared defy him, Geraint abode at home, neglectful of the tournament and the chase, and all those manly exercises in which he had once excelled, content if he had but the companionship of his wife; so that his nobles murmured because he withdrew himself from their society, and the common people jeered at him for a laggard.

Now these evil rumors came to Enid's ears, and it grieved her that she should be the cause, however unwillingly, of her husband's dishonor; and since she could not bring herself to speak to her lord of what was in her heart, daily she grew more sorrowful, till the prince,

aware of her altered demeanor, became uneasy, not knowing its source.

So time went by till it chanced, one summer morning, that with the first rays of the sun, Enid awoke from her slumbers, and, rising, gazed upon her husband as he lay, and marvelled at his strength. "Alas!" said she, "to be the cause that my lord suffers shame! Surely I should find courage to tell him all, were I indeed true wife to him!" Then, by ill chance, her tears falling upon him awoke him, so that he heard her words, but brokenly, and seeing her weep and hearing her accuse herself, it came into his thought that, for all his love and care for her, she was weary of him, nay, even that perhaps she loved him not at all. In anger and grief he called to his squire and bade him saddle his charger and a palfrey for Enid; and to her he said: "Put on thy meanest attire, and thou shalt ride with me into the wilderness. It seems that I have yet to win me fame; but before thou seest home again, thou shalt learn if indeed I am fallen so low as thou deemest." And Enid, wondering and troubled, answered, "I know naught of thy meaning, my lord." "Ask me nothing," said Geraint. So sorrowfully and in silence Enid arrayed herself, choosing for her apparel the faded robe and veil in which first her lord had seen her.

Then the squire brought them their horses; but when he would have mounted and ridden after, Geraint forbade him. And to Enid the Prince said: "Ride before me and turn not back, no matter what thou seest or

hearest. And unless I speak to thee, say not a word to me."

So they rode forward along the least frequented road till they came to a vast forest, which they entered. There Enid, as she rode in front, saw four armed men lurking by the road, and one said to the other: "See, now is our opportunity to win much spoil at little cost; for we may easily overcome this doleful knight, and take from him his arms and lady." And Enid hearing them, was filled with fear and doubt; for she longed to warn her lord of his danger, yet feared to arouse his wrath, seeing he had bidden her keep silence. Then said she to herself: "Better to anger him, even to the slaying of me, than have the misery of seeing him perish." So she waited till Geraint drew near, and said: "Lord, there lie in wait for thee four men fully armed, to slay and rob thee." Then he answered her in anger: "Did I desire thy silence or thy warning? Look, then, and whether thou desirest my life or my death, thou shalt see that I dread not these robbers." Then, as the foremost of the four rode upon him, Geraint drove upon him with his spear with such force that the weapon stood out a cubit behind him; and so he did with the second, and the third, and the fourth. Then, dismounting from his horse, he stripped the dead felons of their armor, bound it upon their horses, and tying the bridle reins together, bade Enid drive the beasts before her. "And," said he, "I charge thee, at thy peril, speak no word to me."

So they went forward; and presently Enid saw how

three horsemen, well armed and well mounted, rode toward them. And one said to the other: "Good fortune, indeed! Here are four horses and four suits of armor for us, and but one knight to deal with; a craven too, by the way he hangs his head." Then Enid thought within herself how her lord was wearied with his former combat, and resolved to warn him even at her own peril. So she waited till he was come up with her, and said: "Lord, there be three men riding toward us, and they promise themselves rich booty at small cost." Wrathfully spoke Geraint: "Their words anger me less than thy disobedience"; and immediately rushing upon the mid-most of the three knights, he bore him from his horse; then he turned upon the other two who rode against him at the same moment, and slew them both.

ado, he set her on her palfrey and bade her drive the horses on in front as before, charging her that, whatever befell, that day at least, she should keep silence.

Soon they passed from the forest into open land, and came upon a river flowing through broad meadows where the mowers toiled. Then, as they waited to let the horses drink their fill, there drew near a youth, bearing a basket of bread and meat and a blue pitcher covered over with a bowl. So when the youth saluted them, Geraint stayed him, asking whence he came. "My lord," said the lad, "I am come from the town hard by, to bring the mowers their breakfast." "I pray thee, then," said the prince, "give of the food to this lady, for she is faint." "That will I gladly," answered the youth, "and do ye also partake, noble sir;" and he spread the meal for them on the grass while they dismounted. So when they had eaten and were refreshed, the youth gathered up the basket and pitcher, saying he would return to the town for food for the mowers. "Do so," said the prince, "and when thou art come there, take for me the best lodging that thou mayst. And for thy fair service, take a horse and armor, which soever thou wilt." "My lord, ye reward me far beyond my deserts," cried the youth. "Right gladly will I make all ready against your arrival, and acquaint my master, the earl, of your coming."

So Geraint and Enid followed after the youth to the town, and there they found everything prepared for their comfort, even as he had promised; for they were lodged

in a goodly chamber well furnished with all that they might require. Then said Geraint to Enid: "Abide at one end of the room and I will remain at the other. And call the woman of the house if thou desirest her aid and comfort in aught." "I thank thee, lord," answered Enid patiently; but she called for no service, remaining silent and forlorn in the furthest corner of the great chamber.

Presently, there came to the house the earl, the youth's master, and with him twelve goodly knights to wait upon him. And Geraint welcomed them right heartily, bidding the host bring forth his best to furnish a feast. So they sat down at a table, each in his degree according to his rank, and feasted long and merrily; but Enid remained the while shrinking into her corner if perchance she might escape all notice.

As they sat at the banquet, the earl asked Prince Geraint what quest he followed. "None but mine own inclination and the adventure it may please heaven to send," said Geraint. Then the earl, whose eye had oft sought Enid as she sat apart, said: "Have I your good leave to cross the room and speak to your fair damsel? For she joins us not in the feast." "Ye have it freely," answered the prince. So the earl arose, and approaching Enid, bowed before her, and spoke to her in low tones, saying: "Damsel, sad life is yours, I fear, to journey with yonder man." "To travel the road he takes is pleasant enough to me," answered Enid. "But see what slights he puts upon you! To suffer you to journey

thus, unattended by page or maiden, argues but little love or reverence for you." "It is as nothing, so that I am with him," said Enid. "Nay, but," said the earl, "see how much happier a life might be yours. Leave this churl, who values you not, and all that I have, land and riches, and my love and service forever shall be yours." "Ye cannot tempt me, with aught that ye can offer, to be false to him to whom I vowed my faith," said she. "Ye are a fool!" said the earl in a fierce whisper. "One word to these my knights, and yonder is a dead man. Then who shall hinder me that I take you by force. Nay, now, be better advised, and I vow you my whole devotion for all time." Then was Enid filled with dread of the man and his might, and seeking but to gain time, she said: "Suffer me to be for this present, my lord, and to-morrow ye shall come and take me as by force. Then shall my name not suffer loss." "So be it," said he; "I will not fail you." With that he left her, and taking his leave of Geraint departed with his followers.

Never a word of what the earl had said did Enid tell her husband that night; and on the departure of his guests, the prince, unheedful of her, flung him on the couch, and soon slept, despite his grief and wrath. But Enid watched again that night and, before cock-crow, arose, set all his armor ready in one place, and then, though fearful of his wrath, stepped to his side and touching him gently, said: "Awake, my lord, and arm you, and save me and yourself." Then she told him of all

the earl had said and of the device she had used to save them both. Then wrathfully he rose and armed himself, bidding her rouse the host to saddle and bring forth the horses. When all was ready, Prince Geraint asked the man his reckoning. "Ye owe but little," said the host. "Take then the seven horses and the suits of armor," said Geraint. "Why, noble sir," cried the host, "I scarce have spent the value of one." "The richer thou," answered Geraint. "Now show me the road from the town."

So the man guided them from the town, and scarce was he returned when Earl Durm—for so was the earl named—hammered at the door, with forty followers at his back. "Where is the knight who was here erewhile?" "He is gone hence, my lord," answered the host. "Fool and villain!" cried the earl, "why didst thou suffer him to escape? Which way went he?" And the man, fearful and trembling, directed the earl the road Geraint had gone.

So it came to pass, as they rode on their way, Enid in front, the prince behind, that it seemed to Enid she heard the beat of many horse-hoofs. And, as before, she broke Geraint's command, caring little for aught that might befall her in comparison of loss to him. "My lord," said she, "seest thou yonder knight pursuing thee and many another with him?" "Yea, in good truth, I see him," said Geraint, "and I see too, that never wilt thou obey me." Then he turned him about and laying lance in rest, bore straight down upon Earl Durm, who

foremost rushed upon him; and such was the shock of their encounter, that Earl Durm was borne from his saddle and lay without motion as one dead. And Geraint charged fiercely upon the earl's men, unhorsing some and wounding others; and the rest, having little heart for the fight after their master's overthrow, turned and fled.

Then Geraint signed to Enid to ride on as before, and so they journeyed the space of another hour while the summer sun beat upon them with ever increasing force. Now the prince had received a grevious hurt in the encounter with Earl Durm and his men; but such was his spirit that he heeded it not, though the wound bled sore under his armor. Presently, as they rode, there came to them the sound of wailing, and by the wayside they saw a lady weeping bitterly over a knight who lay dead on the ground. "Lady," said Geraint, "what has befallen you?" "Noble knight," she replied, "as we rode through the forest, my husband and I, three villains set upon him at once, and slew him." "Which way went they?" asked Geraint. "Straight on by this high-road that ye follow even now," answered she. Then Geraint bade Enid remain with the lady while he rode on to take vengeance on the miscreants. And Enid waited fearfully the long while he was gone, and her heart rejoiced when she saw him returning. But soon her joy was turned to sorrow, for his armor was all dented and covered with blood and his face ghastly; and even as he reached her side, he fell from his horse, prone on the ground. Then

Enid strove to loosen his armor, and having found the wound, she staunched it as best she might and bound it with her veil. And taking his head on her lap, she chafed his hands and tried with her own body to shield him from the sun, her tears falling fast the while. So she waited till, perchance, help might come that way; and presently, indeed, she heard the tramp of horses, and a troop came riding by with the Earl Limours at their head. And when the earl saw the two fallen knights and the weeping woman beside them, he stayed his horse, and said: "Ladies, what has chanced to you?" Then she whose husband had been slain said: "Sir, three caitiffs set on my husband at once and slew him. Then came this good knight and went in pursuit of them, and as I think, slew them; but when he came back, he fell from his horse, sore wounded as ye see, and, I fear me, by now he is dead." "Nay, gentle sir," cried Enid; "it cannot be that he is dead. Only, I beseech you, suffer two of your men to carry him hence to some place of shelter where he may have help and tendance." "I misdoubt me, it is but labor wasted," said the earl; "nevertheless, for the sake of your fair face, it shall be as ye desire." Then he ordered two of his men to carry Geraint to his halls and two more to stay behind and bury the dead knight, while he caused the two women to be placed on led horses; and so they rode to his castle. When they were arrived there, the two spearmen who had carried Geraint, placed him on a settle in the hall, and Enid crouched by his side, striving if by any means

she might bring him back to life. And gradually Geraint recovered, though still he lay as in a swoon, hearing indeed what passed around him, but dimly, as from a distance.

Soon there came into the hall many servitors, who brought forth the tables and set thereon all manner of meats, haunches of venison and boars' heads and great pasties, together with huge flagons of wine. Then when all was set, there came trooping to the board the whole company of Earl Limours' retainers; last of all came the earl himself and took his place on the raised dais. Suddenly, as he feasted and made merry, he espied Enid, who, mistrusting him utterly, would fain have escaped his eye. And when he saw her, he cried, "Lady, cease wasting sorrow on a dead man and come hither. Thou shalt have a seat by my side; ay, and myself, too, and my earldom to boot." "I thank you, Lord," she answered meekly, "but, I pray you, suffer me to be as I am." "Thou art a fool," said Limours; "little enough he prized thee, I warrant, else had he not put thy beauty to such scorn, dressing it in faded rags! Nay, be wise; eat and drink, and thou wilt think the better of me and my fair proffer." "I will not," cried Enid; "I will neither eat nor drink, till my lord arise and eat with me." "Thou vowest more than thou canst perform. He is dead already. Nay, thou shalt drink." With the word, he strode to her and thrust into her hand a goblet brimming with wine, crying, "Drink." "Nay, Lord," she said, "I beseech you, spare me and be pitiful." "Gentle-

ness avails nothing with thee," cried the earl in wrath; "thou hast scorned my fair courtesy. Thou shalt taste the contrary." So saying, he smote her across the face.

Then Enid, knowing all her helplessness, uttered an exceeding bitter cry, and the sound roused Geraint. Grasping his sword, with one bound he was upon the earl and, with one blow, shore his neck in two. Then those who sat at meat fled shrieking, for they believed that the dead had come to life.

But Geraint gazed upon Enid and his heart smote him, thinking of the sorrow he had brought upon her. "Lady and sweet wife," he cried, "for the wrong I have done thee, pardon me. For, hearing thy words not three days since at morn, I doubted thy love and thy loyalty. But now I know thee and trust thee beyond the power of words to shake my faith." "Ah! my lord," cried Enid, "fly, lest they return and slay thee." "Knowest thou where is my charger?" "I will bring thee to it." So they found the war-horse and Geraint mounted it, setting Enid behind him; thus they went forth in the direction of the nearest town, that they might find rest and succor. Then, as they rode, there came forth from a glade of the forest a knight, who, seeing Geraint, at once laid lance in rest as if he would ride upon him. And Enid, fearing for her husband, shrieked aloud, crying: "Noble knight, whosoever ye be, encounter not with a man nigh wounded to the death." Immediately the knight raised his lance and looking more attentively upon them, he exclaimed: "What! is

it Prince Geraint? Pardon me, noble knight, that I knew you not at once. I am that Edeyrn whom once ye overthrew and spared. At Arthur's court, whither ye sent me, I was shown kindness and courtesy little deserved, and now am I knight of Arthur's Round Table. But how came ye in such a case?" Then Geraint told him of his encounter with the three caitiffs, and how he had afterward been borne to the castle of Earl Limours. "To do justice on that same felon is Arthur himself here even now," cried Edeyrn. "His camp is hard by." Then Geraint told Edeyrn how Limours lay dead in his own halls, justly punished for the many wrongs he had done, and how his people were scattered. "Come then yourself to greet the king and tell him what has chanced." So he led the way to Arthur's camp, where it lay in the forest hard by. Then were they welcomed by the king himself and a tent assigned to them, where Geraint rested until his wounds were healed.

Never again, from that time forth, had Geraint a doubt of the love and truth of Enid; and never from that time had she to mourn that he seemed to set small store by his knightly fame. For after he was cured, they returned to their own land, and there Geraint upheld the king's justice, righting wrong and putting down robbery and oppression, so that the people blessed him and his gentle wife. Year by year, his fame grew till his name was known through all lands; and at last, when his time was come, he died a knightly death, as he had lived a knightly life, in the service of his lord, King Arthur.

BOOK VI

CHAPTER XVIII

The Lady of the Fountain

KING ARTHUR was holding his court at Caerleon-upon-Usk, and it was the time of the evening banquet, when there entered the hall the good knight, Sir Kynon. A brave warrior was he, and of good counsel, but he seemed in weary plight as, after due salutation to all, he took his place at the Round Table. So it was that all were eager to hear of his adventure, yet none would question him until he had eaten and drunk. But when he was refreshed, the king said to him: "Whence come ye, Sir Kynon? For it would seem that ye have met with hard adventure." "Sir King," answered Kynon, "it has been with me as never before; for I have encountered with, and been overthrown by, a single knight." All were filled with wonder at his words, for never before had Sir Kynon been worsted in any meeting, man to man. Then said the king, "The stoutest of us must sometime meet his match; yet did ye bear you valiantly, I doubt not. Tell us now, I pray you, of your adventures." "Noble lord," said Kynon, "I had determined to journey into other lands; for I would seek new and untried adventures. So I passed into a far land, and it chanced, one day, that I found myself in the fairest valley I had

ever seen. Through it there flowed a mighty river, which I followed, until I came, as evening fell, to a castle, the largest and strongest I have ever seen. At the castle gate I espied a man of right noble mien, who greeted me courteously, and bade me enter. So as we sat at supper, he inquired of my journey and the quest I followed, and I told him how I sought but adventure, and whether, perchance, I might encounter one stronger than myself. Then the lord of the castle smiled and said: 'I can bring you to such an one, if you would rather that I showed you your disadvantage than your advantage.' And when I questioned him further, he replied: 'Sleep here this night, and to-morrow I will show you such an one as ye seek.' So I rested that night, and with the dawn I rose and took my leave of the lord of the castle, who said to me: 'If ye will persevere in your quest, follow the path to the head of the glade, and ascend the wooded steep until ye come to an open space in the forest, with but one great tree in its midst. Under the tree is a fountain, and beside it a marble slab to which is chained a silver bowl. Take a bowlful of water and dash it upon the slab, and presently there will appear a knight spurring to encounter with you. If ye flee, he will pursue, but if ye overcome him, there exists none in this world whom ye need fear to have ado with.'

"Forthwith I departed, and following these directions, I came at last to such a space as he described, with the tree and fountain in its midst. So I took the bowl and

dashed water from the fountain upon the marble slab, and, on the instant, came a clap of thunder so loud as near deafened me, and a storm of hailstones the biggest that ever man saw. Scarce was I recovered from my confusion, when I saw a knight galloping toward me. All in black was he, and he rode a black horse. Not a word we spoke, but we dashed against each other, and at the first encounter I was unhorsed. Still not a word spoke the Black Knight, but passing the butt end of his lance through my horse's reins, rode away, leaving me shamed and on foot. So I made my way back to the castle, and there I was entertained again that night right hospitably, none questioning me as to my adventure. The next morning, when I rose, there awaited me a noble steed, ready saddled and bridled, and I rode away and am returned hither. And now ye know my story and my shame."

Then were all grieved for the discomfiture of Sir Kynon, who had ever borne himself boldly and courteously to all; and they strove to console him as best they might. Presently there rose from his siege the good knight Sir Owain of Rheged, and said, "My lord, I pray you, give me leave to take upon me this adventure. For I would gladly seek this wondrous fountain and encounter with this same Black Knight." So the king consented, and on the morrow Sir Owain armed him, mounted his horse, and rode forth the way Sir Kynon had directed him.

So he journeyed many a day until at last he reached

the valley of which Sir Kynon had told, and presently he came to the strong castle and, at the gate, met the lord thereof, even as Sir Kynon had done. And the lord of the castle gave him a hearty welcome and made him good cheer, asking nothing of his errand till they were seated about the board. Then, when questioned, Sir Owain declared his quest, that he sought the knight who guarded the fountain. So the lord of the castle, failing to dissuade Sir Owain from the adventure, directed him how he might find the forest glade wherein was the wondrous fountain.

With the dawn Sir Owain rose, mounted his horse, and rode forward until he had found the fountain. Then he dashed water on the marble slab and instantly there burst over him the fearful hailstorm, and through it there came pricking toward him the Black Knight on the black steed. In the first onset, they broke their lances, and then, drawing sword, they fought blade to blade. Sore was the contest, but at the last Owain dealt the Black Knight so fierce a blow that the sword cut through helmet and bone to the very brain. Then the Black Knight knew that he had got his death-wound, and turning his horse's head, fled as fast as he might, Sir Owain following close behind. So they came, fast galloping, to the gate of a mighty castle, and instantly the portcullis was raised and the Black Knight dashed through the gateway. But Sir Owain, following close behind, found himself a prisoner, fast caught between two gates; for as the Black Knight passed through the

inner of the two gates, it was closed before Sir Owain could follow. For the moment none noticed Sir Owain, for all were busied about the Black Knight, who drew not rein till he was come to the castle hall; then as he strove to dismount, he fell from his saddle, dead.

All this Sir Owain saw through the bars of the gate that held him prisoner; and he judged that his time was come, for he doubted not but that the people of the castle would hold his life forfeit for the death of their lord. So as he waited, suddenly there stood at his side a fair damsel, who, laying finger on lip, motioned to him to follow her. Much wondering, he obeyed, and climbed after her up a dark winding staircase, that led from the gateway into a tiny chamber high in the tower. There she set food and wine before him, bidding him eat; then when he was refreshed, she asked him his name and whence he came. "Truly," answered he, "I am Owain of Rheged, knight of Arthur's Round Table, who, in fair fight, have wounded, I doubt not to the death, the Black Knight that guards the fountain and, as I suppose, the lord of this castle. Wherefore, maiden, if ye intend me evil, lead me where I may answer for my deed, boldly, man to man." "Nay," answered the damsel eagerly, "in a good hour ye are come. Well I know your name, for even here have we heard of your mighty deeds; and by good fortune it may be that ye shall release my lady." "Who is your lady?" asked Sir Owain. "None other than the rightful chatelaine of this castle and countess of broad lands besides; but this year and more has the

Black Knight held her prisoner in her own halls because she would not listen to his suit." "Then lead me to your lady forthwith," cried Sir Owain; "right gladly will I take her quarrel upon me if there be any that will oppose me." So she led him to the countess' bower, and there he made him known to the fair lady and proffered her his services. And she that had long deemed there was no deliverance for her, accepted them right gladly. So taking her by the hand, he led her down to the hall, and there, standing at the door, he proclaimed her the lawful lady of that castle and all its lands, and himself ready to do battle in her cause. But none answered his challenge, for those that had held with the Black Knight, deprived of their leader, had lost heart, whereas they that for their loyalty to their lady had been held in subjection, gathered fast about Sir Owain, ready to do battle. So in short space, Sir Owain drove forth the lawless invaders of the countess' lands, and called together her vassals that they might do homage to her anew.

Thus he abode in the castle many days, seeking in all that he might to do her service, until through all her lands order was restored, and her right acknowledged. But when all was done, Sir Owain yet tarried in the lady's castle; for he loved her much, but doubted ever of her favor. So one day, Luned, the damsel who had come to his aid on the day that he slew the Black Knight, said to him: "Alas! Sir Knight, the time must come when ye will leave us. And who will then defend my lady's fountain, which is the key to all her lands? For

who holds the fountain, holds the lands also." "I will never fail your lady while there is breath in my body," cried Sir Owain. "Then were it well that ye stayed here ever," answered Luned. "Gladly would I," answered Sir Owain, "if that I might." "Ye might find a way if your wits were as sharp as your sword," she answered, and laughing, left him, but herself sought her lady. Long he pondered her words, and he was still deep in thought, when there came to him the countess, and said: "Sir Knight, I hear that ye must leave us." "Nay, my lady," answered Sir Owain, "I will stay as long as ye require my services." "There must ever be one to guard the fountain, and he who guards the fountain, is lord of these lands," answered the lady softly. Then Sir Owain found words at last, and bending the knee, he said: "Lady, if ye love me, I will stay and guard you and your lands; and if ye love me not, I will go into my own country, and yet will I come again whensoever ye have need of me. For never loved I any but you." Then the countess bade him stay, and calling her vassals together, she commanded all to do homage to him, and took him for her husband in presence of them all.

Thus Sir Owain won the Lady of the Fountain.

BOOK VII

CHAPTER XIX

The Adventures of Sir Peredur

AT one time there was in the North of Britain a great earl named Evrawc. A stout knight he was, and few were the tournaments at which he was not to be found in company with six of his sons; the seventh only, who was too young to bear arms, remaining at home with his mother. But at the last, after he had won the prize at many a tourney, Earl Evrawc was slain, and his six sons with him; and then the Countess fled with Peredur, her youngest, to a lonely spot in the midst of a forest, far from the dwellings of men; for she was minded to bring him up where he might never hear of jousts and feats of arms, that so at least one son might be left to her.

So Peredur was reared among women and decrepit old men, and even these were strictly commanded never to tell the boy aught of the great world beyond the forest, or what men did therein. None the less, he grew up active and fearless, as nimble and sure-footed as the goats, and patient of much toil.

Then, one day, when Peredur was grown a tall, strong youth, there chanced what had never chanced before; for there came riding through the forest, hard by where Peredur dwelt with his mother, a knight in full armor,

none other, indeed, than the good knight, Sir Owain himself. And seeing him, Peredur cried out: "Mother, what is that, yonder?" "An angel, my son," said his mother. "Then will I go and become an angel with him," said Peredur; and before any one could stay him, he was gone.

When Sir Owain saw him approaching, he reined in his horse, and after courteous salutation, said: "I pray thee, fair youth, tell me, hast thou seen a knight pass this way?" "I know not what a knight may be," answered Peredur. "Why, even such an one as I," answered Sir Owain. "If ye will tell me what I ask you, I will tell you what ye ask me," said Peredur; and when Owain, laughing, consented, Peredur touched the saddle, demanding, "What is this?" "Surely, a saddle," replied Sir Owain; and, in like manner, Peredur asked him of all the parts of his armor, and Owain answered him patiently and courteously. Then when he had ended his questions, Peredur said: "Ride forward; for yesterday I saw from a distance such an one as ye are, ride through the forest."

Sir Peredur returned to his mother, and exclaimed: "Mother, that was no angel, but a noble knight"; and hearing his words, his mother fell into a swoon. But Peredur hastened to the spot where were tethered the horses that brought them firewood and food from afar, and from them he chose a bony piebald, which seemed the strongest and in the best condition. Then he found a pack and fastened it on the horse's back, in some way to

resemble a saddle, and strove with twigs to imitate the trappings he had seen upon Sir Owain's horse. When his preparations were complete, he returned to the countess, who, by then, was recovered from her swoon; and she saw that all her trouble had been in vain, and that the time was come when she must part with her son. "Thou wilt ride forth, my son?" she asked. "Yea, with your leave," he answered. "Hear, then, my counsel," said she; "go thy way to Arthur's court, for there are the noblest and truest knights. And wheresoever thou seest a church, fail not to say thy prayers, and whatsoever woman demands thy aid, refuse her not."

So, bidding his mother farewell, Peredur mounted his horse, and took in his hand a long, sharp-pointed stake. He journeyed many days till, at last, he had come to Caerleon, where Arthur held his court, and dismounting at the door, he entered the hall. Even as he did so, a stranger knight, who had passed in before him, seized a goblet and, dashing the wine in the face of Queen Guenevere, held the goblet aloft and cried: "If any dare dispute this goblet with me or venture to avenge the insult done to Arthur's queen, let him follow me to the meadow without, where I will await him."

And for sheer amazement at this insolence, none moved save Peredur, who cried aloud: "I will seek out this man and do vengeance upon him." Then a voice exclaimed: "Welcome, goodly Peredur, thou flower of knighthood;" and all turned in surprise to look upon a misshapen dwarf, who, a year before, had craved and

obtained shelter in Arthur's court, and since then had spoken no word. But Kay the seneschal, in anger that a mere boy, and one so strangely equipped as Peredur, should have taken up the queen's quarrel when proven knights had remained mute, struck the dwarf, crying: "Thou art ill-bred to remain mute a year in Arthur's court, and then to break silence in praise of such a fellow." Then Peredur, who saw the blow, cried, as he left the hall: "Knight, hereafter ye shall answer to me for that blow." Therewith, he mounted his piebald and rode in haste to the meadow. And when the knight espied him, he cried to him: "Tell me, youth, saw'st thou any coming after me from the court?" "I am come myself," said Peredur. "Hold thy peace," answered the knight angrily, "and go back to the court and say that, unless one comes in haste, I will not tarry, but will ride away, holding them all shamed." "By my faith," said Peredur, "willingly or unwillingly, thou shalt answer to me for thine insolence; and I will have the goblet of thee, ay, and thy horse and armor to boot." With that, in a rage, the knight struck Peredur a violent blow between the neck and the shoulder with the butt-end of his lance. "So!" cried Peredur, "not thus did my mother's servants play with me; and thus will I play with thee;" and drove at him with his pointed stake that it entered the eye of the knight, who forthwith fell dead from his horse. Then Peredur dismounted and began wrenching at the fastenings of the dead man's armor, for he saw in the adventure the means of equipping himself

as a knight should ride; but knowing not the trick of the fastenings, his efforts were in vain. While he yet struggled, there rode up Sir Owain who had followed in hot haste from the court; and when he saw the fallen knight, he was amazed that a mere lad, unarmed and unskilled in knightly exercises, should have prevailed. "Fair youth," said he, "what would ye?" "I would have this knight's iron coat, but I cannot stir it for all my efforts." "Nay, young sir," said Sir Owain, "leave the dead his arms, and take mine and my horse, which I give you right gladly; and come with me to the king to receive the order of knighthood, for, by my faith, ye have shown yourself worthy of it." "I thank you, noble Sir," answered Peredur, "and gladly I accept your gift; but I will not go with you now. Rather will I seek other adventures and prove me further first; nor will I seek the king's presence until I have encountered with the tall knight that so misused the dwarf, and have called him to account. Only, I pray you, take this goblet to Queen Guenevere, and say to my lord, King Arthur, that, in all places and at all times, I am his true vassal, and will render him such service as I may." Then, with Sir Owain's help, Peredur put on the armor, and mounting his horse, after due salutation, rode on his way.

So, for many days, Peredur followed his adventures, and many a knight he met and overthrew. To all he yielded grace, requiring only that they should ride to Caerleon, there to give themselves up to the king's pleasure, and say that Peredur had sent them. At last

he came to a fair castle that rose from the shores of a lake, and there he was welcomed by a venerable old man who pressed him to make some stay. So, as they sat at supper, the old man asked Peredur many questions of himself and his adventure, gazing earnestly on him the while; and at last, he said: "I know thee who thou art. Thou art my sister's son. Stay now with me, and I will teach thee the arts and courtesy and noble bearing of a gentle knight, and give thee the degree when thou art accomplished in all that becomes an honorable knight." Thereto Peredur assented gladly, and remained with his uncle until he had come to a perfect knowledge of chivalry; after that, he received the order of knighthood at the old man's hands, and rode forth again to seek adventures. Presently he came to the city of Caerleon, but though Arthur was there with all his court, Sir Peredur chose to make himself known to none; for he had not yet avenged the dwarf on Sir Kay. Now it chanced, as he walked though the city, he saw at her casement a beautiful maiden whose name was Angharad; and at once he knew that he had seen the damsel whom he must love his life long. So he sought to be acquainted with her, but she scorned him, thinking him but some unproved knight, since he consorted not with those of Arthur's court; and, at last, finding he might in no wise win her favor at that time, he made a vow that never would he speak to Christian until he had gained her love, and forthwith rode away again.

After long journeyings, he came one night to a cas-

tle, and, knocking, gained admittance and courteous reception from the lady who owned it. But it seemed to Sir Peredur that there hung over all a gloom, none caring to talk or make merry, though there was no lack of the consideration due to a guest. Then when the evening hour was come, they took their places at the board, Peredur being set at the countess' right hand; and two nuns entered and placed before the lady a flagon of wine and six white loaves, and that was all the fare. Then the countess gave largely of the food to Sir Peredur, keeping little for herself and her attendants; but this pleased not the knight who, heedless of his oath, said: "Lady, permit me to fare as do the others," and he took but a small portion of that which she had given him. Then the countess, blushing as with shame, said to him: "Sir Knight, if we make you poor cheer, far otherwise is our desire, but we are in sore straits." "Madam," answered Peredur, courteously, "for your welcome I thank you heartily; and, I pray you, if there is aught in which a knight may serve you, tell me your trouble." Then the countess told him how she had been her father's one child, and heir to his broad lands; and how a neighboring baron had sought her hand; but she, misliking him, had refused his suit, so that his wrath was great. Then, when her father died, he had made war upon her, overrunning all her lands till nothing was left to her but the one castle. Long since, all the provision stored therein was consumed, and she must have yielded her to the oppressor but for the charity of the nuns of a neighboring

monastery, who had secretly supplied her with food when, for fear, her vassals had forsaken her. But that day the nuns had told her that no longer could they aid her, and there was naught left save to submit to the invader. This was the story that, with many tears, the countess related to Peredur. "Lady," said he, "with your permission, I will take upon me your quarrel, and to-morrow I will seek to encounter this felon." The countess thanked him heartily, and they retired to rest for that night.

In the morning betimes, Sir Peredur arose, donned his armor and, seeking the countess, desired that the portcullus might be raised, for he would sally forth to seek her oppressor. So he rode out from the castle and saw in the morning light a plain covered with the tents of a great host. With him he took a herald to proclaim that he was ready to meet any in fair fight, in the countess' quarrel. Fortwith, in answer to his challenge, there rode forward the baron himself, a proud and stately knight mounted on a great black horse. The two rushed together, and, at the first encounter, Sir Peredur unhorsed his opponent, bearing him over the crupper with such force that he lay stunned, as one dead. Then Peredur, drawing his sword, dismounted and stood over the fallen knight, who, when he was recovered a little, asked his mercy. "Gladly will I grant it," answered Peredur, "but on these conditions: Ye shall disband this host, restore to the countess threefold all of which ye have deprived her, and, finally, ye shall submit yourself unto her

as her vassal." All this the baron promised to do, and Peredur remained with the countess in her castle until she was firmly established in that which was rightfully hers. Then he bade her farewell, promising his aid if ever she should need his services, and so rode forth again.

And as he rode, at times he was troubled, thinking on the scorn with which the fair Angharad had treated him, and reproaching himself bitterly for having broken his vow of silence. So he journeyed many days, and at length, one morn, dismounting by a little woodland stream, he stood lost in thought, heedless of his surroundings. Now, as it chanced, Arthur and a company of his knights were encamped hard by; for, returning from an expedition, the king had been told of Peredur and how he had taken upon him the queen's quarrel, and forthwith had ridden out in search of him. When the king espied Sir Peredur standing near the brook, he said to the knights about him: "Know ye yonder knight?" "I know him not," said Sir Kay, "but I will soon learn his name." So he rode up to Sir Peredur and spoke to him, demanding his name. When Peredur answered not, though questioned more than once, Sir Kay in anger struck him with the butt-end of his spear. On the instant, Sir Peredur caught him with his lance under the jaw, and, though himself unmounted, hurled Kay from the saddle. Then when Kay returned not, Sir Owain mounted his horse and rode forth to learn what had happened, and by the brook he found Sir Kay sore hurt, and

Peredur ready mounted to encounter any who sought a quarrel. But at once Sir Owain recognized Sir Peredur and rejoiced to see him; and when he found Sir Peredur would speak no word, being himself an honorable knight, he thought no evil, but urged him to ride back with him to Arthur's camp. And Sir Peredur, still speaking never a word, went with Sir Owain, and all respected his silence save Kay, who was long healing of the injuries he had received, and whose angry words none heeded. So they returned to Caerleon and soon, through the city, were noised the noble deeds of Sir Peredur, each new-comer bringing some fresh story of his prowess. Then when Angharad learned how true and famous was the knight whom she had lightly esteemed, she was sore ashamed; and seeing him ever foremost in the tournament and courteous to all in deed, though speaking not a word, she thought that never had there been so noble a knight, or one so worthy of a lady's love. Thus in the winning of her favor, Sir Peredur was released from his vow, and his marriage was celebrated with much pomp before the king and queen. Long and happily he lived, famed through all Britain as one of the most valiant and faithful knights of King Arthur's Round Table.

BOOK VIII

THE HOLY GRAIL

CHAPTER XX

The Coming of Sir Galahad

MANY times had the Feast of Pentecost come round, and many were the knights that Arthur had made since first he founded the Order of the Round Table; yet no knight had appeared who dared claim the seat named by Merlin the Siege Perilous. At last, one vigil of the great feast, a lady came to Arthur's court at Camelot and asked Sir Launcelot to ride with her into the forest hard by, for a purpose not then to be revealed. Launcelot consenting, they rode together until they came to a nunnery hidden deep in the forest; and there the lady bade Launcelot dismount, and led him into a great and stately room. Presently there entered twelve nuns, and with them a youth, the fairest that Launcelot had ever seen. "Sir," said the nuns, "we have brought up this child in our midst, and now that he is grown to manhood, we pray you make him knight, for of none worthier could he receive the honor." "Is this thy own desire?" asked Launcelot of the young squire; and when he said that so it was, Launcelot promised to make him knight after the great festival had been celebrated in the church next day.

So on the morrow, after they had worshipped, Launcelot knighted Galahad—for that was the youth's name—and asked him if he would ride at once with him to the king's court; but the young knight excusing himself, Sir Launcelot rode back alone to Camelot, where all rejoiced that he was returned in time to keep the feast with the whole Order of the Round Table.

Now, according to his custom, King Arthur was waiting for some marvel to befall before he and his knights sat down to the banquet. Presently a squire entered the hall and said: "Sir King, a great wonder has appeared. There floats on the river a mighty stone, as it were a block of red marble, and it is thrust through by a sword, the hilt of which is set thick with precious stones." On hearing this, the king and all his knights went forth to view the stone and found it as the squire had said; moreover, looking closer, they read these words: "None shall draw me hence, but only he by whose side I must hang; and he shall be the best knight in all the world." Immediately, all bade Launcelot draw forth the sword, but he refused, saying that the sword was not for him. Then, at the king's command, Sir Gawain made the attempt and failed, as did Sir Percivale after him. So the knights knew the adventure was not for them, and returning to the hall, took their places about the Round Table.

No sooner were they seated than an aged man, clothed all in white, entered the hall, followed by a young knight in red armor, by whose side hung an empty scabbard. The old man approached King Arthur, and bowing low

before him, said: "Sir, I bring you a young knight of the house and lineage of Joseph of Arimathea, and through him shall great glory be won for all the land of Britain." Greatly did King Arthur rejoice to hear this, and welcomed the two right royally. Then when the young knight had saluted the king, the old man led him to the Siege Perilous and drew off its silken cover; and all the knights were amazed, for they saw that where had been engraved the words, "The Siege Perilous," was written now in shining gold: "This is the siege of the noble prince, Sir Galahad." Straightway the young man seated himself there where none other had ever sat without danger to his life; and all who saw it said, one to another: "Surely this is he that shall achieve the Holy Grail." Now the Holy Grail was the blessed dish from which Our Lord had eaten the Last Supper, and it had been brought to the land of Britain by Joseph of Arimathea; but because of men's sinfulness, it had been withdrawn from human sight, only that, from time to time, it appeared to the pure in heart.

When all had partaken of the royal banquet, King Arthur bade Sir Galahad come with him to the river's brink; and showing him the floating stone with the sword thrust through it, told him how his knights had failed to draw forth the sword. "Sir," said Galahad, "it is no marvel that they failed, for the adventure was meant for me, as my empty scabbard shows." So saying, lightly he drew the sword from the heart of the stone, and lightly he slid it into the scabbard at his side.

While all yet wondered at this adventure of the sword, there came riding to them a lady on a white palfrey who, saluting King Arthur, said: "Sir King, Nacien the hermit sends thee word that this day shall great honor be shown to thee and all thine house; for the Holy Grail shall appear in thy hall, and thou and all thy fellowship shall be fed therefrom." And to Launcelot she said: "Sir Knight, thou hast ever been the best knight of all the world; but another has come to whom thou must yield precedence." Then Launcelot answered humbly: "I know well I was never the best." "Ay, of a truth thou wast and art still, of sinful men," said she, and rode away before any could question her further.

So, that evening, when all were gathered about the Round Table, each knight in his own siege, suddenly there was heard a crash of thunder, so mighty that the hall trembled, and there flashed into the hall a sunbeam, brighter far than any that had ever before been seen; and then, draped all in white samite, there glided through the air what none might see, yet what all knew to be the Holy Grail. And all the air was filled with sweet odors, and on every one was shed a light in which he looked fairer and nobler than ever before. So they sat in an amazed silence, till presently King Arthur rose and gave thanks to God for the grace given to him and to his court. Then up sprang Sir Gawain and made his avow to follow for a year and a day the Quest of the Holy Grail, if perchance he might be granted the vision of it.

Immediately other of the knights followed his example, binding themselves to the Quest of the Holy Grail until, in all, one hundred and fifty had vowed themselves to the adventure.

Then was King Arthur grieved, for he foresaw the ruin of his noble Order. And turning to Sir Gawain, he said: "Nephew, ye have done ill, for through you I am bereft of the noblest company of knights that ever brought honor to any realm in Christendom. Well I know that never again shall all of you gather in this hall, and it grieves me to lose men I have loved as my life and through whom I have won peace and righteousness for all my realm."

So the king mourned and his knights with him, but their oaths they could not recall.

Chapter XXI

How Sir Galahad Won the Red Cross Shield

Great woe was there in Camelot next day when, after worship in the Cathedral, the knights who had vowed themselves to the Quest of the Holy Grail got to horse and rode away. A goodly company it was that passed through the streets, the townfolk weeping to see them go; Sir Launcelot du Lac and his kin, Sir Galahad of whom all expected great deeds, Sir Bors and Sir Percivale, and many another scarcely less famed than they. So they rode together that day to the Castle of Vagon, where they were entertained right hospitably, and the

next day they separated, each to ride his own way and see what adventures should befall him.

So it came to pass that, after four days' ride, Sir Galahad reached an abbey. Now Sir Galahad was still clothed in red armor as when he came to the king's court, and by his side hung the wondrous sword; but he was without a shield. They of the abbey received him right heartily, as also did the brave King Bagdemagus, Knight of the Round Table, who was resting there. When they had greeted each other, Sir Galahad asked King Bagdemagus what adventure had brought him there. "Sir," said Bagdemagus, "I was told that in this abbey was preserved a wondrous shield which none but the best knight in the world might bear without grievous harm to himself. And though I know well that there are better knights than I, to-morrow I purpose to make the attempt. But, I pray you, bide at this monastery awhile until you hear from me; and if I fail, do ye take the adventure upon you." "So be it," said Sir Galahad.

The next day, at their request, Sir Galahad and King Bagdemagus were led into the church by a monk and shown where, behind the altar, hung the wondrous shield, whiter than snow save for the blood-red cross in its midst. Then the monk warned them of the danger to any who, being unworthy, should dare to bear the shield. But King Bagdemagus made answer: "I know well that I am not the best knight in the world, yet will I try if I may bear it." So he hung it about his neck, and, bidding farewell, rode away with his squire.

The two had not journeyed far before they saw a knight approach, armed all in white mail and mounted upon a white horse. Immediately he laid his spear in rest and, charging King Bagdemagus, pierced him through the shoulder and bore him from his horse; and standing over the wounded knight, he said: "Knight, thou hast shown great folly, for none shall bear this shield save the peerless knight, Sir Galahad." Then, taking the shield, he gave it to the squire, and said: "Bear this shield to the good Knight Galahad and greet him well from me." "What is your name?" asked the squire. "That is not for thee or any other to know." "One thing I pray you," said the squire; "why may this shield be borne by none but Sir Galahad without danger?" "Because it belongs to him only," answered the stranger knight, and vanished.

Then the squire took the shield and setting King Bagdemagus on his horse, bore him back to the abbey where he lay long, sick unto death. To Galahad the squire gave the shield and told him all that had befallen. So Galahad hung the shield about his neck and rode the way that Bagdemagus had gone the day before; and presently he met the White Knight, whom he greeted courteously, begging that he would make known to him the marvels of the red-cross shield. "That will I gladly," answered the White Knight. "Ye must know, Sir Knight, that this shield was made and given by Joseph of Arimathea to the good King Evelake of Sarras, that, in the might of the holy symbol, he should overthrow

the heathen who threatened his kingdom. But afterward, King Evelake followed Joseph to this land of Britain where they taught the true faith unto the people who before were heathen. Then when Joseph lay dying, he bade King Evelake set the shield in the monastery where ye lay last night, and foretold that none should wear it without loss until that day when it should be taken by the knight, ninth and last in descent from him, who should come to that place the fifteenth day after receiving the degree of knighthood. Even so has it been with you, Sir Knight." So saying, the unknown knight disappeared and Sir Galahad rode on his way.

Chapter XXII

The Adventures of Sir Percivale

After he had left his fellows, Sir Percivale rode long through the forest until, one evening, he reached a monastery where he sought shelter for the night. The next morning, he went into the chapel to hear mass and there he espied the body of an old, old man, laid on a richly adorned couch. At first it seemed as if the aged man were dead, but presently, raising himself in his bed, he took off his crown and, delivering it to the priest, bade him place it on the altar. So when the service was concluded, Sir Percivale asked who the aged king might be. Then he was told that it was none other than King Evelake who accompanied Joseph of Arimathea to Britain. And on a certain occasion, the king had approached the

Holy Grail nigher than was reverent and, for his impiety, God had punished him with blindness. Thereupon he repented and, entreating God earnestly, had obtained his petition that he should not die until he had seen the spotless knight who should be descended from him in the ninth degree. (This his desire was fulfilled later when Sir Galahad came thither; after which, he died and was buried by the good knight.)

The next day, Sir Percivale continued his journey and presently met with twenty knights who bore on a bier the body of a dead knight. When they espied Sir Percivale, they demanded of him who he was and whence he came. So he told them, whereupon they all shouted, "Slay him! slay him!" and setting upon him all at once, they killed his horse and would have slain him but that the good knight, Sir Galahad, passing that way by chance, came to his rescue and put his assailants to flight. Then Galahad rode away as fast as he might, for he would not be thanked, and Sir Percivale was left, horseless and alone, in the forest.

So Sir Percivale continued his journey on foot as well as he might; and ever the way became lonelier, until at last he came to the shores of a vast sea. There Sir Percivale abode many days, without food and desolate, doubting whether he should ever escape thence. At last it chanced that, looking out to sea, Sir Percivale descried a ship and, as it drew nearer, he saw how it was all hung with satin and velvet. Presently it reached the land and out of it there stepped a lady of marvellous beauty, who asked

him how he came there; "For know," said she, "ye are like to die here by hunger or mischance." "He whom I serve will protect me," said Sir Percivale. "I know well whom ye desire most to see," said the lady. "Ye would meet with the Red Knight who bears the red-cross shield." "Ah! lady, I pray you tell me where I may find him," cried Sir Percivale. "With a good will," said the damsel; "if ye will but promise me your service when I shall ask for it, I will lead you to the knight, for I met him of late in the forest." So Sir Percivale promised gladly to serve her when she should need him. Then the lady asked him how long he had fasted. "For three days," answered Sir Percivale. Immediately she gave orders to her attendants forthwith to pitch a tent and set out a table with all manner of delicacies, and of these she invited Sir Percivale to partake. "I pray you, fair lady," said Sir Percivale, "who are ye that show me such kindness?" "Truly," said the lady, "I am but a hapless damsel, driven forth from my inheritance by a great lord whom I have chanced to displease. I implore you, Sir Knight, by your vows of knighthood, to give me your aid." Sir Percivale promised her all the aid he could give, and then she bade him lie down and sleep, and herself took off his helmet, and unclasped his sword-belt. So Sir Percivale slept, and when he waked, there was another feast prepared, and he was given the rarest and the strongest wines that ever he had tasted. Thus they made merry, and, when the lady begged Percivale to rest him there awhile, promising him all that ever he

could desire if he would vow himself to her service, almost he forgot the quest to which he was vowed, and would have consented, but that his eye fell upon his sword where it lay. Now in the sword-hilt there was set a red cross and, seeing it, Percivale called to mind his vow, and, thinking on it, he signed him with the cross on his forehead. Instantly, the tent was overthrown and vanished in thick smoke; and she who had appeared a lovely woman disappeared from his sight in semblance of a fiend.

Then was Sir Percivale sore ashamed that almost he had yielded to the temptings of the Evil One, and earnestly he prayed that his sin might be forgiven him. Thus he remained in prayer far into the night, bewailing his weakness; and when the dawn appeared, a ship drew nigh the land. Sir Percivale entered into it, but could find no one there; so commending himself to God, he determined to remain thereon, and was borne over the seas for many days, he knew not whither.

Chapter XXIII

The Adventures of Sir Bors

Among the knights vowed to the Quest of the Holy Grail was Sir Bors, one of the kin of Sir Launcelot, a brave knight and pious. He rode through the forest many a day, making his lodging most often under a leafy tree, though once on his journey he stayed at a castle, that he might do battle for its lady against a felon knight who would have robbed and oppressed her.

So, on a day, as he rode through the forest, Sir Bors came to the parting of two ways. While he was considering which he should follow, he espied two knights driving before them a horse on which was stretched, bound and naked, none other than Sir Bors' own brother, Sir Lionel; and, from time to time, the two false knights beat him with thorns so that his body was all smeared with blood, but, so great was his heart, Sir Lionel uttered never a word. Then, in great wrath, Sir Bors laid his lance in rest and would have fought the felon knights to rescue his brother, but that, even as he spurred his horse, there came a bitter cry from the other path and, looking round, he saw a lady being dragged by a knight into the darkest part of the forest where none might find and rescue her. When she saw Sir Bors, she cried to him:

"Ah! Bors," said he, "I can give you tidings indeed. Your brother is dead;" and parting the bushes, he showed him the body of a dead man, to all seeming Sir Lionel's self. Then Sir Bors grieved sorely, misdoubting almost whether he should not rather have rescued his own brother; and at the last, he dug a grave and buried the dead man; then he rode sorrowfully on his way.

When he had ridden many days, he met with a yeoman whom he asked if there were any adventures in those parts. "Sir," said the man, "at the castle, hard by, they hold a great tournament." Sir Bors thanked him and rode along the way pointed out to him; and presently, as he passed a hermitage, whom should he see sitting at its door but his brother, Sir Lionel, whom he had believed dead. Then in great joy, he leaped from his horse, and running to Lionel, cried: "Fair brother, how came ye hither?" "Through no aid of yours," said Sir Lionel angrily; "for ye left me bound and beaten, to ride to the rescue of a maiden. Never was brother so dealt with by brother before. Keep you from me as ye may!" When Sir Bors understood that his brother would slay him, he knelt before him entreating his pardon. Sir Lionel took no heed, but mounting his horse and taking his lance, cried: "Keep you from me, traitor! Fight, or die!" And Sir Bors moved not; for to him it seemed a sin most horrible that brother should fight with brother. Then Sir Lionel, in his rage, rode his horse at him, bore him to the ground and trampled him under the horse's hoofs, till Bors lay beaten to the earth

in a swoon. Even so, Sir Lionel's anger was not stayed; for, alighting, he drew his sword and would have smitten off his brother's head, but that the holy hermit, hearing the noise of conflict, ran out of the hermitage and threw himself upon Sir Bors. "Gentle Knight," he cried, "have mercy upon him and on thyself; for of the sin of slaying thy brother, thou couldst never be quit." "Sir Priest," said Lionel, "if ye leave him not, I shall slay you too." "It were a lesser sin than to slay thy brother," answered the hermit. "So be it," cried Lionel, and with one blow struck off the hermit's head. Then he would have worked his evil will upon his brother too, but that, even as he was unlacing Sir Bors' helm to cut off his head, there rode up the good knight Sir Colgrevance, a fellow of the Round Table. When he saw the dead hermit and was aware how Lionel sought the life of Bors, he was amazed, and springing from his horse, ran to Lionel and dragged him back from his brother. "Do ye think to hinder me?" said Sir Lionel. "Let come who will, I will have his life." "Ye shall have to do with me first," cried Colgrevance. Therewith, they took their swords, and, setting their shields before them, rushed upon each other. Now Sir Colgrevance was a good knight, but Sir Lionel was strong and his anger added to his strength. So long they fought that Sir Bors had time to recover from his swoon, and raising himself with pain on his elbow, saw how the two fought for his life; and as it seemed, Sir Lionel would prevail, for Sir Colgrevance grew weak and weary. Sir Bors tried to get to his feet,

but, so weak he was, he could not stand; and Sir Colgrevance, seeing him stir, called on him to come to his aid, for he was in mortal peril for his sake. But even as he called, Sir Lionel cut him to the ground, and, as one possessed, rushed upon his brother to slay him. Sir Bors entreated him for mercy, and when he would not, sorrowfully he took his sword, saying: "Now, God forgive me, though I defend my life against my brother."

Immediately there was heard a voice saying, "Flee, Bors, and touch not thy brother;" and at the same time, a fiery cloud burned between them, so that their shields glowed with the flame, and both knights fell to the earth. But the voice came again, saying, "Bors, leave thy brother and take thy way to the sea. There thou shalt meet Sir Percivale." Then Sir Bors make ready to obey, and, turning to Lionel, said: "Dear brother, I pray you forgive me for aught in which I have wronged you." "I forgive you," said Sir Lionel, for he was too amazed and terrified to keep his anger.

So Sir Bors continued his journey, and at the last, coming to the sea-shore, he espied a ship, draped all with white samite, and entering thereon, he saw Sir Percivale, and much they rejoiced them in each other's company.

Chapter XXIV

The Adventures of Sir Launcelot

After Sir Launcelot had parted from his fellows at the Castle of Vagon, he rode many days through the

forest without adventure, till he chanced upon a knight close by a little hermitage in the wood. Immediately, as was the wont of errant knights, they prepared to joust, and Launcelot, whom none before had overthrown, was borne down, man and horse, by the stranger knight. Thereupon a nun, who dwelt in the hermitage, cried: "God be with thee, best knight in all this world," for she knew the victor for Sir Galahad. But Galahad, not wishing to be known, rode swiftly away; and presently Sir Launcelot got to horse again and rode slowly on his way, shamed and doubting sorely in his heart whether this quest was meant for him.

When night fell, he came to a great stone cross which stood at the parting of the way and close by a little ruined chapel. So Sir Launcelot, being minded to pass the

seemed that the great candlestick came forth of itself from the chapel, floating through the air before a table of silver on which was the Holy Grail. Thereupon, the sick knight raised himself, and on his bended knees he approached so nigh that he kissed the holy vessel; and immediately he cried: "I thank Thee, sweet Lord, that I am healed of my sickness." And all the while Sir Launcelot, who saw this wonder, felt himself held that he could not move. Then a squire brought the stranger knight his weapons, in much joy that his lord was cured. "Who think ye that this knight may be who remains sleeping when the holy vessel is so near?" said the knight. "In truth," said the squire, "he must be one that is held by the bond of some great sin. I will take his helm and his sword, for here have I brought you all your armor save only these two." So the knight armed him from head to foot, and taking Sir Launcelot's horse, rode away with his squire. On the instant, Sir Launcelot awoke amazed, not knowing whether he had dreamed or not; but while he wondered, there came a terrible voice, saying: "Launcelot, arise and leave this holy place." In shame, Sir Launcelot turned to obey, only to find horse and sword and shield alike vanished. Then, indeed, he knew himself dishonored. Weeping bitterly, he made the best of his way on foot, until he came to a cell where a hermit was saying prayer. Sir Launcelot knelt too, and, when all was ended, called to the hermit, entreating him for counsel. "With good will," said the hermit. So Sir Launcelot made himself known and told the hermit all,

lamenting how his good fortune was turned to wretchedness and his glory to shame; and truly, the hermit was amazed that Sir Launcelot should be in such case. "Sir," said he, "God has given you manhood and strength beyond all other knights; and more are ye bounden to his service." "I have sinned," said Sir Launcelot; "for in all these years of my knighthood, I have done everything for the honor and glory of my lady and naught for my Maker; and little thank have I given to God for all his benefits to me." Then the holy man gave Sir Launcelot good counsel and made him rest there that night; and the next day he gave him a horse, a sword and a helmet, and bade him go forth and bear himself knightly as the servant of God.

Chapter XXV

How Sir Launcelot saw the Holy Grail

For many days after he had left the hermitage, Sir Launcelot rode through the forest, but there came to him no such adventures as had befallen him on other quests to the increase of his fame. At last, one nighttide, he came to the shores of a great water and there he lay down to sleep; but as he slept, a voice called on him: "Launcelot, arise, put on thine armor and go on thy way until thou comest to a ship. Into that thou shalt enter." Immediately, Sir Launcelot started from his sleep to obey, and, riding along the shore, came presently to a ship beached on the strand; no sooner had

he entered it, than the ship was launched—how, he might not know. So the ship sailed before the wind for many a day. No mortal was on it, save only Sir Launcelot, yet were all his needs supplied. Then, at last, the ship ran ashore at the foot of a great castle; and it was midnight. Sir Launcelot waited not for the dawn, but, his sword gripped in his hand, sprang ashore, and then right before him, he saw a postern where the gate stood open indeed, but two grisly lions kept the way. And when Sir Launcelot would have rushed upon the great beasts with his sword, it was struck from his hand, and a voice said: "Ah! Launcelot, ever is thy trust in thy might rather than thy Maker!" Sore ashamed, Sir Launcelot took his sword and thrust it back into the sheath, and going forward, he passed unhurt through the gateway, the lions that kept it falling back from his path. So without more adventure, Launcelot entered into the castle; and there he saw how every door stood open, save only one, and that was fast barred, nor, with all his force, might he open it. Presently from the chamber within came the sound of a sweet voice in a holy chant, and then in his heart Launcelot knew that he was come to the Holy Grail. So, kneeling humbly, he prayed that to him might be shown some vision of that he sought. Forthwith the door flew open and from the chamber blazed a light such as he had never known before; but when he made to enter, a voice cried: "Launcelot, forbear," and sorrowfully he withdrew. Then where he knelt, far even from the threshold of the

wondrous room, he saw a silver table and, on it, covered with red samite, the Holy Grail. At sight of that which he had sought so long, his joy became so great that, unmindful of the warning, he advanced into the room and drew nigh even to the table itself. Then on the instant there burst between him and it a blaze of light, and he fell to the ground. There he lay, nor might he move nor utter any sound; only he was aware of hands busy about him which bore him away from the chamber.

For four-and-twenty days Sir Launcelot lay as in a trance. At the end of that time he came to himself, and found those about him that had tended him in his swoon. These, when they had given him fresh raiment, brought him to the aged king—Pelles was his name—that owned that castle. The king entertained him right royally, for he knew of the fame of Sir Launcelot; and long he talked with him of his quest and of the other knights who followed it, for he was of a great age and knew much of men. At the end of four days he spoke to Sir Launcelot, bidding him return to Arthur's court: "For," said he, "your quest is ended here, and all that ye shall see of the Holy Grail ye have seen." So Launcelot rode on his way, grieving for the sin that hindered him from the perfect vision of the Holy Grail, but thanking God for that which he had seen. So in time he came to Camelot, and told to Arthur all that had befallen him.

Chapter XXVI

The End of the Quest

After he had rescued Sir Percivale from the twenty knights who beset him, Sir Galahad rode on his way till nightfall, when he sought shelter at a little hermitage. Thither there came in the night a damsel who desired to speak with Sir Galahad; so he arose and went to her. "Galahad," said she, "arm you and mount your horse and follow me, for I am come to guide you in your quest." So they rode together until they had come to the seashore, and there the damsel showed Galahad a great ship into which he must enter. Then she bade him farewell, and he, going on to the ship, found there already the good knights Sir Bors and Sir Percivale, who made much joy of the meeting. They abode in that ship until they had come to the castle of King Pelles, who welcomed them right gladly. Then, as they all sat at supper that night, suddenly the hall was filled with a great light, and the holy vessel appeared in their midst, covered all in white samite. While they all rejoiced, there came a voice, saying: "My knights whom I have chosen, ye have seen the holy vessel dimly. Continue your journey to the city of Sarras and there the perfect Vision shall be yours."

Now in the city of Sarras had dwelt long time Joseph of Arimathea, teaching its people the true faith, before ever he came into the land of Britain; but when Sir Galahad and his fellows came there after long voyage,

they found it ruled by a heathen king named Estorause, who cast them into a deep dungeon. There they were kept a year, but at the end of that time, the tyrant died. Then the great men of the land gathered together to consider who should be their king; and, while they were in council, came a voice bidding them take as their king the youngest of the three knights whom Estorause had thrown into prison.

So in fear and wonder they hastened to the prison, and, releasing the three knights, made Galahad king as the voice had bidden them.

Thus Sir Galahad became king of the famous city of Sarras, in far Babylon. He had reigned a year when, one morning early, he and the other two knights, his fellows, went into the chapel, and there they saw, kneel-

prayed; in the moment when he had seen the vision, his soul had gone back to God.

So the two knights buried him in that far city, themselves mourning and all the people with them. And immediately after, Sir Percivale put off his arms and took the habit of a monk, living a devout and holy life until, a year and two months later, he also died and was buried near Sir Galahad. Then Sir Bors armed him, and bidding farewell to the city, sailed away until, after many weeks, he came again to the land of Britain. There he took horse, and stayed not till he had come to Camelot. Great was the rejoicing of Arthur and all his knights when Sir Bors was once more among them. When he had told all the adventures which had befallen him and the good knights, his companions, all who heard were filled with amaze. But the king, he caused the wisest clerks in the land to write in great books this Quest of the Holy Grail, that the fame of it should endure unto all time.

BOOK IX

CHAPTER XXVII

The Fair Maid of Astolat

AT last, the Quest of the Holy Grail was ended, and by ones and twos the knights came back to Camelot, though many who had set out so boldly were never seen again about the Round Table.

Great was the joy of King Arthur when Sir Launcelot and Sir Bors returned, for, so long had they been away, that almost he had feared that they had perished. In their honor there was high festival for many days in London, where Arthur then had his court; and the king made proclamation of a great tournament that he would hold at Camelot, when he and the King of Nortgalis would keep the lists against all comers.

So, one fair morning of spring, King Arthur made ready to ride to Camelot and all his knights with him, save Launcelot who excused himself, saying that an old wound hindered him from riding. But when the king, sore vexed, had departed, the queen rebuked Sir Launcelot, and bade him go and prove his great prowess as of old. "Madam," said Sir Launcelot, "in this, as in all else, I obey you; at your bidding I go, but know that in this tournament I shall adventure me in other wise than ever before."

The next day, at dawn, Sir Launcelot mounted his horse and, riding forth unattended, journeyed all that day till, as evening fell, he reached the little town of Astolat, and there, at the castle, sought lodgment for that night. The old Lord of Astolat was glad at his coming, judging him at once to be a noble knight, though he knew him not, for it was Sir Launcelot's will to remain unknown.

So they went to supper, Sir Launcelot and the old lord, his son, Sir Lavaine, and his daughter Elaine, whom they of the place called the Fair Maid of Astolat. As they sat at meat, the baron asked Sir Launcelot if he rode to the tournament. "Yea," answered Launcelot; "and right glad should I be if, of your courtesy, ye would lend me a shield without device." "Right willingly," said his host; "ye shall have my son, Sir Tirre's shield. He was but lately made knight and was hurt in his first encounter, so his shield is bare enough. If ye will take with you my young son, Sir Lavaine, he will be glad to ride in the company of so noble a knight and will do you such service as he may." "I shall be glad indeed of his fellowship," answered Sir Launcelot courteously.

Now it seemed to the fair Elaine that never had she beheld so noble a knight as this stranger; and seeing that he was as gentle and courteous as he was strong, she said to him: "Fair Knight, will ye wear my favor at this tournament? For never have I found knight yet to wear my crimson sleeve, and sure am I that none other could ever win it such honor." "Maiden," said Sir

Launcelot, "right gladly would I serve you in aught; but it has never been my custom to wear lady's favor." "Then shall it serve the better for disguise," answered Elaine. Sir Launcelot pondered her words, and at last he said: "Fair maiden, I will do for you what I have done for none, and will wear your favor." So with great glee, she brought it him, a crimson velvet sleeve embroidered with great pearls, and fastened it in his helmet. Then Sir Launcelot begged her to keep for him his own shield until after the tournament, when he would come for it again and tell them his name.

The next morn Sir Launcelot took his departure with Sir Lavaine and, by evening, they were come to Camelot. Forthwith Sir Lavaine led Sir Launcelot to the house of a worthy burgher, where he might stay in pri-

Lavaine: "Sir Knight, will ye give me your aid if I go to the rescue of the weaker side? For it seems to me they may not much longer hold their own unaided." "Sir," answered Lavaine, "I will gladly follow you and do what I may." So the two laid their lances in rest and charged into the thickest of the fight and, with one spear, Sir Launcelot bore four knights from the saddle. Lavaine, too, did nobly, for he unhorsed the bold Sir Bedivere and Sir Lucan the Butler. Then with their swords they smote lustily on the left hand and on the right, and those whom they had come to aid rallying to them, they drove the Knights of the Round Table back a space. So the fight raged furiously, Launcelot ever being in the thickest of the press and performing such deeds of valor that all marvelled to see him, and would fain know who was the Knight of the Crimson Sleeve. But the knights of Arthur's court felt shame of their discomfiture, and, in especial, those of Launcelot's kin were wroth that one should appear who seemed mightier even than Launcelot's self. So they called to each other and, making a rally, directed all their force against the stranger knight who had so turned the fortunes of the day. With lances in rest, Sir Lionel, Sir Bors, and Sir Ector, bore down together upon Sir Launcelot, and Sir Bors' spear pierced Sir Launcelot and brought him to the earth, leaving the spear head broken off in his side. This Sir Lavaine saw, and immediately, with all his might, he rode upon the King of Scots, unhorsed him and took his horse to Sir Launcelot. Now Sir Launce-

lot felt as he had got his death-wound, but such was his spirit that he was resolved to do some great deed while yet his strength remained. So, with Lavaine's aid, he got upon the horse, took a spear and laying it in rest, bore down, one after the other, Sir Bors, Sir Lionel, and Sir Ector. Next he flung himself into the thickest of the fight, and before the trumpets sounded the signal to cease, he had unhorsed thirty good knights.

Then the Kings of Scotland and Ireland came to Sir Launcelot and said: "Sir Knight, we thank you for the service done us this day. And now, we pray you, come with us to receive the prize which is rightly yours; for never have we seen such deeds as ye have done this day." "My fair lords," answered Sir Launcelot, "for aught that I have accomplished, I am like to pay dearly; I

the hermitage, Lavaine oft fearing that Sir Launcelot would die. And when the hermit saw Sir Launcelot, all pale and besmeared with blood, he scarce knew him for the bold Sir Launcelot du Lac; but he bore him within and dressed his wounds and bade him be of good cheer, for he should recover. So there Sir Launcelot abode many weeks and Sir Lavaine with him; for Lavaine would not leave him, such love had he for the good knight he had taken for his lord.

Now when it was known that the victorious knight had departed from the field sore wounded, Sir Gawain vowed to go in search of him. So it chanced that, in his wanderings, he came to Astolat, and there he had a hearty welcome of the Lord of Astolat, who asked him for news of the tournament. Then Sir Gawain related how two stranger knights, bearing white shields, had won great glory, and in especial one, who wore in his helm a crimson sleeve, had surpassed all others in knightly prowess. At these words, the fair Elaine cried aloud with delight. "Maiden," said Gawain, "know ye this knight?" "Not his name," she replied; "but full sure was I that he was a noble knight when I prayed him to wear my favor." Then she showed Gawain the shield which she had kept wrapped in rich broideries, and immediately Sir Gawain knew it for Launcelot's. "Alas!" cried he, "without doubt it was Launcelot himself that we wounded to the death. Sir Bors will never recover the woe of it."

Then, on the morrow, Sir Gawain rode to London to tell the court how the stranger knight and Launcelot were

one; but the Fair Maid of Astolat rose betimes, and having obtained leave of her father, set out to search for Sir Launcelot and her brother Lavaine. After many journeyings, she came, one day, upon Lavaine exercising his horse in a field, and by him she was taken to Sir Launcelot. Then, indeed, her heart was filled with grief when she saw the good knight to whom she had given her crimson sleeve thus laid low; so she abode in the hermitage, waiting upon Sir Launcelot and doing all within her power to lessen his pain.

After many weeks, by the good care of the hermit and the fair Elaine, Sir Launcelot was so far recovered that he might bear the weight of his armor and mount his horse again. Then, one morn, they left the hermitage and rode all three, the Fair Maid, Sir Launcelot, and Sir Lavaine, to the castle of Astolat, where there was much joy of their coming. After brief sojourn, Sir Launcelot desired to ride to court, for he knew there would be much sorrow among his kinsmen for his long absence. But when he would take his departure, Elaine cried aloud: "Ah! my lord, suffer me to go with you, for I may not bear to lose you." "Fair child," answered Sir Launcelot gently, "that may not be. But in the days to come, when ye shall love and wed some good knight, for your sake I will bestow upon him broad lands and great riches; and at all times will I hold me ready to serve you as a true knight may." Thus spoke Sir Launcelot, but the fair Elaine answered never a word.

So Sir Launcelot rode to London where the whole court was glad of his coming; but from the day of his departure, the Fair Maid drooped and pined until, when ten days were passed, she felt that her end was at hand. So she sent for her father and two brothers, to whom she said gently: "Dear father and brethren, I must now leave you." Bitterly they wept, but she comforted them all she might, and presently desired of her father a boon. "Ye shall have what ye will," said the old lord; for he hoped that she might yet recover. Then first she required her brother, Sir Tirre, to write a letter, word for word as she said it; and when it was written, she turned to her father and said: "Kind father, I desire that, when I am dead, I may be arrayed in my fairest raiment, and placed on a bier; and let the bier be set within a barge, with one to steer it until I be come to London. Then, perchance, Sir Launcelot will come and look upon me with kindness." So she died, and all was done as she desired; for they set her, looking as fair as a lily, in a barge all hung with black, and an old dumb man went with her as helmsman.

Slowly the barge floated down the river until it had come to Westminster; and as it passed under the palace walls, it chanced that King Arthur and Queen Guenevere looked forth from a window. Marvelling much at the strange sight, together they went forth to the quay, followed by many of the knights. Then the king espied the letter clasped in the dead maiden's hand, and drew it forth gently and broke the seal. And thus the letter ran:

"Most noble Knight, Sir Launcelot, I, that men called the Fair Maid of Astolat, am come hither to crave burial at thy hands for the sake of the unrequited love I gave thee. As thou art peerless knight, pray for my soul."

Then the king bade fetch Sir Launcelot, and when he was come, he showed him the letter. And Sir Launcelot, gazing on the dead maiden, was filled with sorrow. "My lord Arthur," he said, "for the death of this dear child I shall grieve my life long. Gentle she was and loving, and much was I beholden to her; but what she desired I could not give." "Yet her request now thou wilt grant, I know," said the king; "for ever thou art kind and courteous to all." "It is my desire," answered Sir Launcelot.

So the Maid of Astolat was buried in the presence of the king and queen and of the fellowship of the Round Table, and of many a gentle lady who wept, that time, the fair child's fate. Over her grave was raised a tomb of white marble, and on it was sculptured the shield of Sir Launcelot; for, when he had heard her whole story, it was the king's will that she that in life had guarded the shield of his noblest knight, should keep it also in death.

BOOK X

QUEEN GUENEVERE

CHAPTER XXVIII

How Mordred Plotted Against Sir Launcelot

BEFORE Merlin passed from the world of men, imprisoned in the great stone by the evil arts of Vivien, he had uttered many marvellous prophecies, and one that boded ill to King Arthur; for he foretold that, in the days to come, a son of Arthur's sister should stir up bitter war against the king, and at last a great battle should be fought in the West, when many a brave knight should find his doom.

Now, among the nephews of Arthur, was one most dishonorable; his name was Mordred. No knightly deed had he ever done, and he hated to hear the good report of others because he himself was a coward and envious. But of all the Round Table there was none that Mordred hated more than Sir Launcelot du Lac, whom all true knights held in most honor; and not the less did Mordred hate Launcelot that he was the knight whom Queen Guenevere had in most esteem. So, at last, his jealous rage passing all bounds, he spoke evil of the queen and of Launcelot, saying that they were traitors to the king. Now Sir Gawain and Sir Gareth, Mordred's brothers, refused to give ear to these slan-

ders, holding that Sir Launcelot, in his knightly service of the queen, did honor to King Arthur also; but by ill-fortune another brother, Sir Agravaine, had ill-will to the queen, and professed to believe Mordred's evil tales. So the two went to King Arthur with their ill stories.

Now when Arthur had heard them, he was wroth; for never would he lightly believe evil of any, and Sir Launcelot was the knight whom he loved above all others. Sternly then he bade them begone and come no more to him with unproven tales against any, and, least of all, against Sir Launcelot and their lady, the queen.

The two departed, but in their hearts was hatred against Launcelot and the queen, more bitter than ever for the rebuke they had called down upon themselves; and they resolved, from that time forth, diligently to watch if, perchance, they might find aught to turn to evil account against Sir Launcelot.

Not long after it seemed to them that the occasion had come. For King Arthur having ridden forth to hunt far from Carlisle, where he then held court, the queen sent for Sir Launcelot to speak with him in her bower. Then Agravaine and Mordred got together twelve knights, friends of Sir Gawain, their brother, and persuaded them to come with them for they should do the king a service. So with the twelve knights they watched and waited in a little room until they saw Sir Launcelot, all unarmed, pass into the queen's chamber; and when the door was closed upon him, they came forth, and Sir Agravaine and Sir Mordred thundered on

the door, crying so that all the court might hear: "Thou traitor, Sir Launcelot, come forth from the queen's chamber. Come forth, for thy treason against the king is known to all!"

Then Sir Launcelot and the queen were amazed and filled with shame that such a clamor should be raised where the queen was. While they waited and listened in dismay, Sir Mordred and Sir Agravaine took up the cry again, the twelve knights echoing it: "Traitor Launcelot, come forth and meet thy doom; for thy last hour is come." Then Sir Launcelot, wroth more for the queen than for himself, exclaimed: "This shameful cry will kill me; better death than such dishonor. Lady, as I have ever been your true knight, since the day when my lord, King Arthur, knighted me, pray for me if now I meet my death." Then he went to the door and cried to those without: "Fair lords, cease this outcry. I will open the door, and then ye shall do with me as ye will." With the word, he set open the door, but only by so much that one knight could enter at a time. So a certain Sir Colgrevance of Gore, a knight of great stature, pushed into the room and thrust at Sir Launcelot with all his might; but Sir Launcelot, with the arm round which he had wrapped his cloak, turned aside the sword and, with his bare hand, dealt Colgrevance such a blow on the helmet that he fell grovelling to the earth. Then Sir Launcelot thrust to and barred the door, and stripping the fallen knight of his armor, armed himself in haste with the aid of the queen and her ladies.

All this while, Sir Agravaine and Sir Mordred continued their outcry; so when he was armed, Sir Launcelot called to them to cease their vile cries and the next day he would meet any or all of them in arms and knightly disprove their vile slander. Now there was not one among those knights who dared meet Sir Launcelot in the open field, so they were resolved to slay him while they had the advantage over him. When Sir Launcelot understood their evil purpose, he set wide the door and rushed upon them. At the first blow, he slew Sir Agravaine, and soon eleven other knights lay cold on the earth beside him. Only Mordred escaped, for he fled with all his might; but, even so, he was sore wounded.

Then Sir Launcelot spoke to the queen. "Madam," said he, "here may I no longer stay, for many a foe have I made me this night. And when I am gone, I know not what evil may be spoken of you for this night's work. I pray you, then, suffer me to lead you to a place of safety." "Ye shall run no more risk for my sake," said the queen; "only go hence in haste before more harm befall you. But as for me, here I abide. I will flee for no traitor's outcry."

So Sir Launcelot, seeing that at that time there was naught he might do for Queen Guenevere, withdrew with all his kin to a little distance from Carlisle, and awaited what should befall.

Chapter XXIX

The Trial of the Queen

When Mordred escaped Sir Launcelot, he got to horse all wounded as he was, and never drew rein till he had found King Arthur, to whom he told all that had happened.

Then great was the king's grief. Despite all that Mordred could say, he was slow to doubt Sir Launcelot, whom he loved, but his mind was filled with forebodings; for many a knight had been slain, and well he knew that their kin would seek vengeance on Sir Launcelot, and the noble fellowship of the Round Table be utterly destroyed by their feuds.

All too soon, it proved even as the king had feared. Many were found to hold with Sir Mordred; some because they were kin to the knights that had been slain, some from envy of the honor and worship of the noble Sir Launcelot; and among them even were those who dared to raise their voice against the queen herself, calling for judgment upon her as leagued with a traitor against the king, and as having caused the death of so many good knights. Now in those days the law was that if any one were accused of treason by witnesses, or taken in the act, that one should die the death by burning, be it man or woman, knight or churl. So then the murmurs grew to a loud clamor that the law should have its course, and that King Arthur should pass sentence on the queen. Then was the king's woe doubled: "For," said he, "I

sit as king to be a rightful judge and keep all the law; wherefore I may not do battle for my own queen, and now there is none other to help her." So a decree was issued that Queen Guenevere should be burned at the stake outside the walls of Carlisle.

Forthwith, King Arthur sent for his nephew, Sir Gawain, and said to him: "Fair nephew, I give it in charge to you to see that all is done as has been decreed." But Sir Gawain answered boldly: "Sir King, never will I be present to see my lady the queen die. It is of ill counsel that ye have consented to her death." Then the king bade Gawain send his two young brothers, Sir Gareth and Sir Gaheris, to receive his commands, and these he desired to attend the queen to the place of execution. So Gareth made answer for both: "My lord the King, we owe you obedience in all things, but know that it is sore against our wills that we obey you in this; nor will we appear in arms in the place where that noble lady shall die"; then sorrowfully they mounted their horses and rode to Carlisle.

When the day appointed had come, the queen was led forth to a place without the walls of Carlisle, and there she was bound to the stake to be burned to death. Loud were her ladies' lamentations, and many a lord was found to weep at that grievous sight of a queen brought so low; yet was there none who dared come forward as her champion, lest he should be suspected of treason. As for Gareth and Gaheris, they could not bear the sight and stood with their faces covered in their mantles.

Then, just as the torch was to be applied to the fagots, there was a sound as of many horses galloping, and the next instant a band of knights rushed upon the astonished throng, their leader cutting down all who crossed his path until he had reached the queen, whom he lifted to his saddle and bore from the press. Then all men knew that it was Sir Launcelot, come knightly to rescue the queen, and in their hearts they rejoiced. So with little hindrance they rode away, Sir Launcelot and all his kin with the queen in their midst, till they came to the castle of the Joyous Garde where they held the queen in safety and all reverence.

But of that day came a kingdom's ruin; for among the slain were Gawain's brothers, Sir Gareth and Sir Gaheris. Now Sir Launcelot loved Sir Gareth as if he had been his own younger brother, and himself had knighted him; but, in the press, he struck at him and killed him, not seeing that he was unarmed and weaponless; and in like wise, Sir Gaheris met his death. So when word was brought to King Arthur of what had passed, Sir Gawain asked straightway how his brothers had fared. "Both are slain," said the messenger. "Alas! my dear brothers!" cried Sir Gawain; "how came they by their death?" "They were both slain by Sir Launcelot." "That will I never believe," cried Sir Gawain; "for my brother, Sir Gareth, had such love for Sir Launcelot that there was naught Sir Launcelot could ask him that he would not do." But the man said again: "He is slain, and by Sir Launcelot."

Then, from sheer grief, Sir Gawain fell swooning to the ground. When he was recovered, he said: "My lord and uncle, is it ever as this man says, that Sir Launcelot has slain my brother Sir Gareth?" "Alas!" said the king, "Launcelot rode upon him in the press and slew him, not seeing who he was or that he was unarmed." "Then," cried Gawain fiercely, "here I make my avow. Never, while my life lasts, will I leave Sir Launcelot in peace until he has rendered me account for the slaying of my brother." From that day forth, Sir Gawain would not suffer the king to rest until he had gathered all his host and marched against the Joyous Garde. Thus began the war which broke up the fellowship of the Round Table.

Chapter XXX

How Sir Gawain Defied Sir Launcelot

Now it came to the ears of the Pope in Rome that King Arthur was besieging Sir Launcelot in his castle of the Joyous Garde, and it grieved him that there should be strife between two such goodly knights, the like of whom was not to be found in Christendom. So he called to him the Bishop of Rochester, and bade him carry word to Britain, both to Arthur and to Sir Launcelot, that they should be reconciled, the one to the other, and that King Arthur should receive again Queen Guenevere.

Forthwith Sir Launcelot desired of King Arthur

assurance of liberty and reverence for the queen, as also safe conduct for himself and his knights, that he might bring Dame Guenevere, with due honor, to the king at Carlisle; and thereto the king pledged his word.

So Launcelot set forth with the queen, and behind them rode a hundred knights arrayed in green velvet, the housings of the horses of the same all studded with precious stones; thus they passed through the city of Carlisle, openly, in the sight of all, and there were many who rejoiced that the queen was come again and Sir Launcelot with her, though they of Gawain's party scowled upon him.

When they were come into the great hall where Arthur sat, with Sir Gawain and other great lords about him, Sir Launcelot led Guenevere to the throne and both knelt before the king; then, rising, Sir Launcelot lifted the queen to her feet, and thus he spoke to King Arthur, boldly and well before the whole court: "My lord, Sir Arthur, I bring you here your queen, than whom no truer nor nobler lady ever lived; and here stand I, Sir Launcelot du Lac, ready to do battle with any that dare gainsay it;" and with these words Sir Launcelot turned and looked upon the lords and knights present in their places, but none would challenge him in that cause, not even Sir Gawain, for he had ever affirmed that Dame Guenevere was a true and honorable lady.

Then Sir Launcelot spoke again: "Now, my Lord Arthur, in my own defence it behooves me to say that never in aught have I been false to you. That I slew

certain knights is true; but I hold me guiltless, seeing that they brought death upon themselves. For no sooner had I gone to the queen's bower, as she had commanded me, than they beset the door, with shameful outcry, that all the court might hear, calling me traitor and felon knight." "And rightly they called you," cried Sir Gawain fiercely. "My lord, Sir Gawain," answered Sir Launcelot, "in their quarrel they proved not themselves right, else had not I, alone, encountered fourteen knights and come forth unscathed."

Then said King Arthur: "Sir Launcelot, I have ever loved you above all other knights, and trusted you to the uttermost; but ill have ye done by me and mine." "My lord," said Launcelot, "that I slew Sir Gareth I shall mourn as long as life lasts. As soon would I have slain my own nephew, Sir Bors, as have harmed Sir Gareth wittingly; for I myself made him knight, and loved him as my brother." "Liar and traitor," cried Sir Gawain, "ye slew him, defenceless and unarmed." "It is full plain, Sir Gawain," said Launcelot, "that never again shall I have your love; and yet there has been old kindness between us, and once ye thanked me that I saved your life." "It shall not avail you now," said Sir Gawain; "traitor ye are, both to the king and to me. Know that, while life lasts, never will I rest until I have avenged my brother Sir Gareth's death upon you." "Fair nephew," said the king, "cease your brawling. Sir Launcelot has come under surety of my word that none shall do him harm. Elsewhere, and at

another time, fasten a quarrel upon him, if quarrel ye must." "I care not," cried Sir Gawain fiercely. "The proud traitor trusts so in his own strength that he thinks none dare meet him. But here I defy him and swear that, be it in open combat or by stealth, I shall have his life. And know, mine uncle and king, if I shall not have your aid, I and mine will leave you for ever, and, if need be, fight even against you." "Peace," said the king; and to Sir Launcelot: "We give you fifteen days in which to leave this kingdom." Then Sir Launcelot sighed heavily and said: "Full well I see that no sorrow of mine for what is past availeth me." Then he went to the queen where she sat, and said: "Madam, the time is come when I must leave this fair realm that I have loved. Think well of me, I pray you, and send for me if ever there be aught in which a true knight may serve lady." Therewith he turned him about and, without greeting to any, passed through the hall, and with his faithful knights rode to the Joyous Garde, though ever thereafter, in memory of that sad day, he called it the Dolorous Garde.

There he called about him his friends and kinsmen, saying: "Fair Knights, I must now pass into my own lands." Then they all, with one voice, cried that they would go with him. So he thanked them, promising them all fair estates and great honor when they were come to his kingdom; for all France belonged to Sir Launcelot. Yet was he loth to leave the land where he had followed so many glorious adventures, and sore he

mourned to part in anger from King Arthur. "My mind misgives me," said Sir Launcelot, "but that trouble shall come of Sir Mordred, for he is envious and a mischief-maker, and it grieves me that never more I may serve Sir Arthur and his realm."

So Sir Launcelot sorrowed; but his kinsmen were wroth for the dishonor done him, and making haste to depart, by the fifteenth day they were all embarked to sail overseas to France.

Chapter XXXI

How King Arthur and Sir Gawain went to France

From the day when Sir Launcelot brought the queen to Carlisle, never would Gawain suffer the king to be at rest; but always he desired him to call his army together that they might go to attack Sir Launcelot in his own land.

Now King Arthur was loth to war against Sir Launcelot; and seeing this, Sir Gawain upbraided him bitterly. "I see well it is naught to you that my brother, Sir Gareth, died fulfilling your behest. Little ye care if all your knights be slain, if only the traitor Launcelot escape. Since, then, ye will not do me justice nor avenge your own nephew, I and my fellows will take the traitor when and how we may. He trusts in his own might that none can encounter with him; let see if we may not entrap him."

Th[illegible]d, King Arthur called his army together and

bade collect a great fleet; for rather would he fight openly with Sir Launcelot than that Sir Gawain should bring such dishonor upon himself as to slay a noble knight treacherously. So with a great host, the king passed overseas to France, leaving Sir Mordred to rule Britain in his stead.

When Launcelot heard that King Arthur and Sir Gawain were coming against him, he withdrew into the strong castle of Benwick; for unwilling indeed was he to fight with the king, or to do an injury to Sir Gareth's brother. The army passed through the land, laying it waste, and presently encamped about the castle, laying close siege to it; but so thick were the walls, and so watchful the garrison, that in no way could they prevail against it.

One day, there came to Launcelot seven brethren, brave knights of Wales, who had joined their fortunes to his, and said: "Sir Launcelot, bid us sally forth against this host which has invaded and laid waste your lands, and we will scatter it; for we are not wont to cower behind walls." "Fair lords," answered Launcelot, "it is grief to me to war on good Christian knights, and especially on my lord, King Arthur. Have but patience and I will send to him and see if, even now, there may not be a treaty of peace between us; for better far is peace than war." So Sir Launcelot sought out a damsel and, mounting her upon a palfrey, bade her ride to King Arthur's camp and require of the king to cease warring on his lands, proffering fair terms of peace.

When the damsel came to the camp, there met her Sir Lucan the Butler. "Fair damsel," said Sir Lucan, "do ye come from Sir Launcelot?" "Yea, in good truth," said the damsel; "and, I pray you, lead me to King Arthur." "Now, may ye prosper in your errand," said Sir Lucan. "Our king loves Sir Launcelot dearly and wishes him well; but Sir Gawain will not suffer him to be reconciled to him." So when the damsel had come before the king she told him all her tale, and much she said of Sir Launcelot's love and goodwill to his lord the king, so that the tears stood in Arthur's eyes. But Sir Gawain broke in roughly: "My lord and uncle, shall it be said of us that we came hither with such a host to hie us home again, nothing done, to be the scoff of all men?" "Nephew," said the king, "methinks Sir Launcelot offers fair and generously. It were well if ye would accept his proffer. Nevertheless, as the quarrel is yours, so shall the answer be." "Then, damsel," said Sir Gawain, "say unto Sir Launcelot that the time for peace is past. And tell him that I, Sir Gawain, swear by the faith I owe to knighthood that never will I forego my revenge."

So the damsel returned to Sir Launcelot and told him all. Sir Launcelot's heart was filled with grief nigh unto breaking; but his knights were enraged and clamored that he had endured too much of insult and wrong, and that he should lead them forth to battle. Sir Launcelot armed him sorrowfully, and presently the gates were set open and he rode forth, he and all his company. But to

all his knights he had given commandment that none should seek King Arthur: "For never," said he, "will I see the noble king, who made me knight, either killed or shamed."

Fierce was the battle between those two hosts. On Launcelot's side, Sir Bors and Sir Lavaine and many another did right well; while on the other side, King Arthur bore him as the noble knight he was, and Sir Gawain raged through the battle, seeking to come at Sir Launcelot. Presently, Sir Bors encountered with King Arthur, and unhorsed him. This Sir Launcelot saw and, coming to the king's side, he alighted and raising him from the ground, mounted him upon his own horse. Then King Arthur, looking upon Launcelot, cried: "Ah! Launcelot, Launcelot! That ever there should be war betwen us two!" and tears stood in the king's eyes. "Ah! my Lord Arthur," cried Sir Launcelot, "I pray you stay this war." As they spoke thus, Sir Gawain came upon them, and, miscalling Sir Launcelot traitor and coward, had almost ridden upon him before Launcelot could provide him of another horse. Then the two hosts drew back, each on its own side, to see the battle between Sir Launcelot and Sir Gawain; for they wheeled their horses, and departing far asunder, rushed again upon each other with the noise of thunder, and each bore the other from his horse. Then they put their shields before them and set on each other with their swords; but while ever Sir Gawain smote fiercely, Sir Launcelot was content only to ward off blows, because he

would not, for Sir Gareth's sake, do any harm to Sir Gawain. But the more Sir Launcelot forbore him, the more furiously Sir Gawain struck, so that Sir Launcelot had much ado to defend himself, and at the last smote Gawain on the helm so mightily that he bore him to the ground. Then Sir Launcelot stood back from Sir Gawain. But Gawain cried: "Why do ye draw back, traitor knight? Slay me while ye may, for never will I cease to be your enemy while my life lasts." "Sir," said Launcelot, "I shall withstand you as I may; but never will I smite a fallen knight." Then he spoke to King Arthur: "My Lord, I pray you, if but for this day, draw off your men. And think upon our former love if ye may; but, be ye friend or foe, God keep you." Thereupon Sir Launcelot drew off with his men into his castle, and King Arthur and his company to their tents. As for Sir Gawain, his squires bore him to his tent where his wounds were dressed.

BOOK XI

THE MORTE D'ARTHUR

CHAPTER XXXII

Mordred the Traitor

SO Sir Gawain lay healing of the grim wound which Sir Launcelot had given him, and there was peace between the two armies, when there came messengers from Britain bearing letters for King Arthur; and more evil news than they brought might not well be, for they told how Sir Mordred had usurped his uncle's realm. First, he had caused it to be noised abroad that King Arthur was slain in battle with Sir Launcelot, and, since there be many ever ready to believe any idle rumor and eager for any change, it had been no hard task for Sir Mordred to call the lords to a Parliament and persuade them to make him king. But the queen could not be brought to believe that her lord was dead, so she took refuge in the Tower of London from Sir Mordred's violence, nor was she to be induced to leave her strong refuge for that aught Mordred could promise or threaten.

This was the news that came to Arthur as he lay encamped about Sir Launcelot's castle of Benwick. Forthwith, he bade his host make ready to move, and when they had reached the coast, they embarked and made sail to reach Britain with all possible speed.

Sir Mordred, on his part, had heard of their sailing, and hasted to get together a great army. It was grievous to see how many a stout knight held by Mordred, ay, even many whom Arthur himself had raised to honor and fortune; for it is the nature of men to be fickle. Thus it was that, when Arthur drew near to Dover, he found Mordred with a mighty host, waiting to oppose his landing. Then there was a great sea-fight, those of Mordred's party going out in boats, great and small, to board King Arthur's ships and slay him and his men or ever they should come to land. Right valiantly did King Arthur bear him, as was his wont, and boldly his followers fought in his cause, so that at last they drove off their enemies and landed at Dover in spite of Mordred and his array. For that time Mordred fled, and King Arthur bade those of his party bury the slain and tend the wounded.

So as they passed from ship to ship, salving and binding the hurts of the men, they came at last upon Sir Gawain, where he lay at the bottom of a boat, wounded to the death, for he had received a great blow on the wound that Sir Launcelot had given him. They bore him to his tent, and his uncle, the king, came to him, sorrowing beyond measure. "Methinks," said the king, "my joy on earth is done; for never have I loved any men as I have loved you, my nephew, and Sir Launcelot. Sir Launcelot I have lost, and now I see you on your death-bed." "My king," said Sir Gawain, "my hour is come, and I have got my death at Sir Launcelot's hand; for I am smitten on the wound he gave me. And rightly

am I served, for of my wilfulness and stubbornness comes this unhappy war. I pray you, my uncle, raise me in your arms and let me write to Sir Launcelot before I die."

Thus, then, Sir Gawain wrote: "To Sir Launcelot, the noblest of all knights, I, Gawain, send greeting before I die. For I am smitten on the wound ye gave me before your castle of Benwick in France, and I bid all men bear witness that I sought my own death and that ye are innocent of it. I pray you, by our friendship of old, come again into Britain, and when ye look upon my tomb, pray for Gawain of Orkney. Farewell."

So Sir Gawain died and was buried in the Chapel at Dover.

Chapter XXXIII

The Battle in the West

The day after the battle at Dover, King Arthur and his host pursued Sir Mordred to Barham Down where again there was a great battle fought, with much slaughter on both sides; but, in the end, Arthur was victorious, and Mordred fled to Canterbury.

Now, by this time, many that Mordred had cheated by his lying reports, had drawn unto King Arthur, to whom at heart they had ever been loyal, knowing him for a true and noble king and hating themselves for having been deceived by such a false usurper as Sir Mordred. Then when he found that he was being de-

serted, Sir Mordred withdrew to the far West, for there men knew less of what had happened, and so he might still find some to believe in him and support him; and being without conscience, he even called to his aid the heathen hosts that his uncle, King Arthur, had driven from the land, in the good years when Launcelot was of the Round Table.

King Arthur followed ever after; for in his heart was bitter anger against the false nephew who had brought woe upon him and all his realm. At the last, when Mordred could flee no further, the two hosts were drawn up near the shore of the great western sea; and it was the Feast of the Holy Trinity.

That night, as King Arthur slept, he thought that Sir Gawain stood before him, looking just as he did in

and, with the dawn, messengers went to the camp of the enemy, to call Sir Mordred to a conference. So it was determined that the meeting should take place in the sight of both armies, in an open space between the two camps, and that King Arthur and Mordred should each be accompanied by fourteen knights. Little enough faith had either in the other, so when they set forth to the meeting, they bade their hosts join battle if ever they saw a sword drawn. Thus they went to the conference.

Now as they talked, it befell that an adder, coming out of a bush hard by, stung a knight in the foot; and he, seeing the snake, drew his sword to kill it and thought no harm thereby. But on the instant that the sword flashed, the trumpets blared on both sides and the two hosts rushed to battle. Never was there fought a fight of such bitter enmity; for brother fought with brother, and comrade with comrade, and fiercely they cut and thrust, with many a bitter word between; while King Arthur himself, his heart hot within him, rode through and through the battle, seeking the traitor Mordred. So they fought all day, till at last the evening fell. Then Arthur, looking around him, saw of his valiant knights but two left, Sir Lucan and Sir Bedivere, and these sore wounded; and there, over against him, by a great heap of the dead, stood Sir Mordred, the cause of all this ruin. Thereupon the king, his heart nigh broken with grief for the loss of his true knights, cried with a loud voice, "Traitor! now is thy doom upon thee!" and with his spear gripped in both hands, he rushed upon Sir Mordred and smote

him that the weapon stood out a fathom behind. And Sir Mordred knew that he had his death-wound. With all the might that he had, he thrust him up the spear to the haft and, with his sword, struck King Arthur upon the head, that the steel pierced the helmet and bit into the head; then he fell back, stark and dead.

Sir Lucan and Sir Bedivere went to the king where he lay, swooning from the blow, and bore him to a little chapel on the sea-shore. As they laid him on the ground, Sir Lucan fell dead beside the king, and Arthur, coming to himself, found but Sir Bedivere alive beside him.

Chapter XXXIV

The Passing of Arthur

So King Arthur lay wounded to the death, grieving, not that his end was come, but for the desolation of his kingdom and the loss of his good knights. And looking upon the body of Sir Lucan, he sighed and said: "Alas! true knight, dead for my sake! If I lived, I should ever grieve for thy death, but now mine own end draws nigh." Then, turning to Sir Bedivere, who stood sorrowing beside him, he said: "Leave weeping now, for the time is short and much to do. Hereafter shalt thou weep if thou wilt. But take now my sword Excalibur, hasten to the water side, and fling it into the deep. Then, watch what happens and bring me word thereof." "My Lord," said Sir Bedivere, "your command shall be obeyed;"

and taking the sword, he departed. But as he went on his way, he looked on the sword, how wondrously it was formed and the hilt all studded with precious stones; and, as he looked, he called to mind the marvel by which it had come into the king's keeping. For on a certain day, as Arthur walked on the shore of a great lake, there had appeared above the surface of the water a hand brandishing a sword. On the instant, the king had leaped into a boat, and, rowing to the lake, had got the sword and brought it back to land. Then he had seen how, on one side the blade, was written, "Keep me," but on the other, "Throw me away," and, sore perplexed, he had shown it to Merlin, the great wizard, who said: "Keep it now. The time for casting away has not yet come." Thinking on this, it seemed to Bedivere that no good, but harm, must come of obeying the king's word; so hiding the sword under a tree, he hastened back to the little chapel. Then said the king: "What saw'st thou?" "Sir," answered Bedivere, "I saw naught but the waves, heard naught but the wind." "That is untrue," said King Arthur; "I charge thee, as thou art true knight, go again and spare not to throw away the sword."

Sir Bedivere departed a second time, and his mind was to obey his lord; but when he took the sword in his hand, he thought: "Sin it is and shameful, to throw away so glorious a sword." Then, hiding it again, he hastened back to the king. "What saw'st thou?" said Sir Arthur. "Sir, I saw the water lap on the crags." Then spoke the king in great wrath: "Traitor and un-

kind! Twice hast thou betrayed me! Art dazzled by the splendor of the jewels, thou that, till now, hast ever been dear and true to me? Go yet again, but if thou fail me this time, I will arise and, with mine own hands, slay thee."

Then Sir Bedivere left the king and, that time, he took the sword quickly from the place where he had hidden it and, forbearing even to look upon it, he twisted the belt about it and flung it with all his force into the water. A wondrous sight he saw, for, as the sword touched the water, a hand rose from out the deep, caught it, brandished it thrice, and drew it beneath the surface.

Sir Bedivere hastened back to the king and told him what he had seen. "It is well," said Arthur; "now, bear me to the water's edge; and hasten, I pray thee, for I have tarried over long and my wound has taken cold." So Sir Bedivere raised the king on his back and bore him tenderly to the lonely shore, where the lapping waves floated many an empty helmet and the fitful moonlight fell on the upturned faces of the dead. Scarce had they reached the shore when there hove in sight a barge, and on its deck stood three tall women, robed all in black and wearing crowns on their heads. "Place me in the barge," said the king, and softly Sir Bedivere lifted the king into it. And these three queens wept sore over Arthur, and one took his head in her lap and chafed his hands, crying: "Alas! my brother, thou hast been overlong in coming and, I fear me, thy wound has

taken cold." Then the barge began to move slowly from the land. When Sir Bedivere saw this, he lifted up his voice and cried with a bitter cry: "Ah! my Lord Arthur, thou art taken from me! And I, whither shall I go?" "Comfort thyself," said the king, "for in me is no comfort more. I pass to the Valley of Avilion, to heal me of my grievous wound. If thou seest me never again, pray for me."

So the barge floated away out of sight, and Sir Bedivere stood straining his eyes after it till it had vanished utterly. Then he turned him about and journeyed through the forest until, at daybreak, he reached a hermitage. Entering it, he prayed the holy hermit that he might abide with him, and there he spent the rest of his life in prayer and holy exercise.

But of King Arthur is no more known. Some men, indeed, say that he is not dead, but abides in the happy Valley of Avilion until such time as his country's need is sorest, when he shall come again and deliver it. Others say that, of a truth, he is dead, and that, in the far West, his tomb may be seen, and written on it these words:

"Here lies Arthur, once King
and King to be."

Chapter XXXV

The Death of Sir Launcelot and of the Queen

When news reached Sir Launcelot in his own land of the treason of Mordred, he gathered his lords and knights together, and rested not till he had come to Britain to aid King Arthur. He landed at Dover, and there the evil tidings were told him, how the king had met his death at the hands of his traitor nephew. Then was Sir Launcelot's heart nigh broken for grief. "Alas!" he cried, "that I should live to know my king overthrown by such a felon! What have I done that I should have caused the deaths of the good knights, Sir Gareth, Sir Gaheris, and Sir Gawain, and yet that such a villain should escape my sword!" Then he desired to

last, he came to a nunnery where he saw in the cloister many nuns waiting on a fair lady; none other, indeed, than Queen Guenevere herself. And she, looking up, saw Sir Launcelot, and at the sight grew so pale that her ladies feared for her; but she recovered, and bade them go and bring Sir Launcelot to her presence. When he was come, she said to him: "Sir Launcelot, glad am I to see thee once again that I may bid thee farewell; for in this world shall we never meet again." "Sweet Madam," answered Sir Launcelot, "I was minded, with your leave, to bear you to my own country, where I doubt not but I should guard you well and safely from your enemies." "Nay, Launcelot," said the queen, "that may not be; I am resolved never to look upon the world again, but here to pass my life in prayer and in such good works as I may. But thou, do thou get back to thine own land and take a fair wife; and ye both shall ever have my prayers." "Madam," replied Sir Launcelot, "ye know well that shall never be. And since ye are resolved to lead a life of prayer, I, too, will forsake the world if I can find hermit to share his cell with me; for ever your will has been mine." Long and earnestly he looked upon her as he might never gaze enough; then, getting to horse, he rode slowly away.

Nor did they ever meet again in life. For Queen Guenevere abode in the great nunnery of Almesbury where Sir Launcelot had found her, and presently, for the holiness of her life, was made Abbess. But Sir Launcelot, after he had left her, rode on his way till he

came to the cell where Sir Bedivere dwelt with the holy hermit; and when Sir Bedivere had told him all that had befallen, of the great battle in the West, and of the passing away of Arthur, Sir Launcelot flung down his arms and implored the holy hermit to let him remain there as the servant of God. So Sir Launcelot donned the serge gown and abode in the hermitage as the priest of God.

Presently, there came riding that way the good Sir Bors, Launcelot's nephew; for, when Sir Launcelot returned not to Dover, Sir Bors and many another knight went forth in search of him. There, then, Sir Bors remained and, within half a year, there joined themselves to these three many who in former days had been fellows of the Round Table; and the fame of their piety spread far and wide.

away, growing weaker daily. So at the end of six weeks he called to him his fellows, and bidding them all farewell, desired that his dead body should be conveyed to the Joyous Garde, there to be buried; for that in the church at Glastonbury he was not worthy to lie. And that same night he died, and was buried, as he had desired, in his own castle. So passed from the world the bold Sir Launcelot du Lac, bravest, most courteous, and most gentle of knights, whose peer the world has never seen nor ever shall.

After Sir Launcelot's death, Sir Bors and the pious knights, his companions, took their way to the Holy Land, and there they died in battle against the Turk.

So ends this story of King Arthur and his noble fellowship of the Round Table.

THE END